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University of California
Berkeley, California

Western Mining in the Twentieth Century
Oral History Series

Horace M. Albright

Mining Lawyer and Executive,
U.S. Potash Company, U.S. Borax, 1933-1962

With Introductions by
Amelia R. Fry
James Gerstley
Marian Albright Schenck

An Interview Conducted by
Eleanor Swent
in 1986

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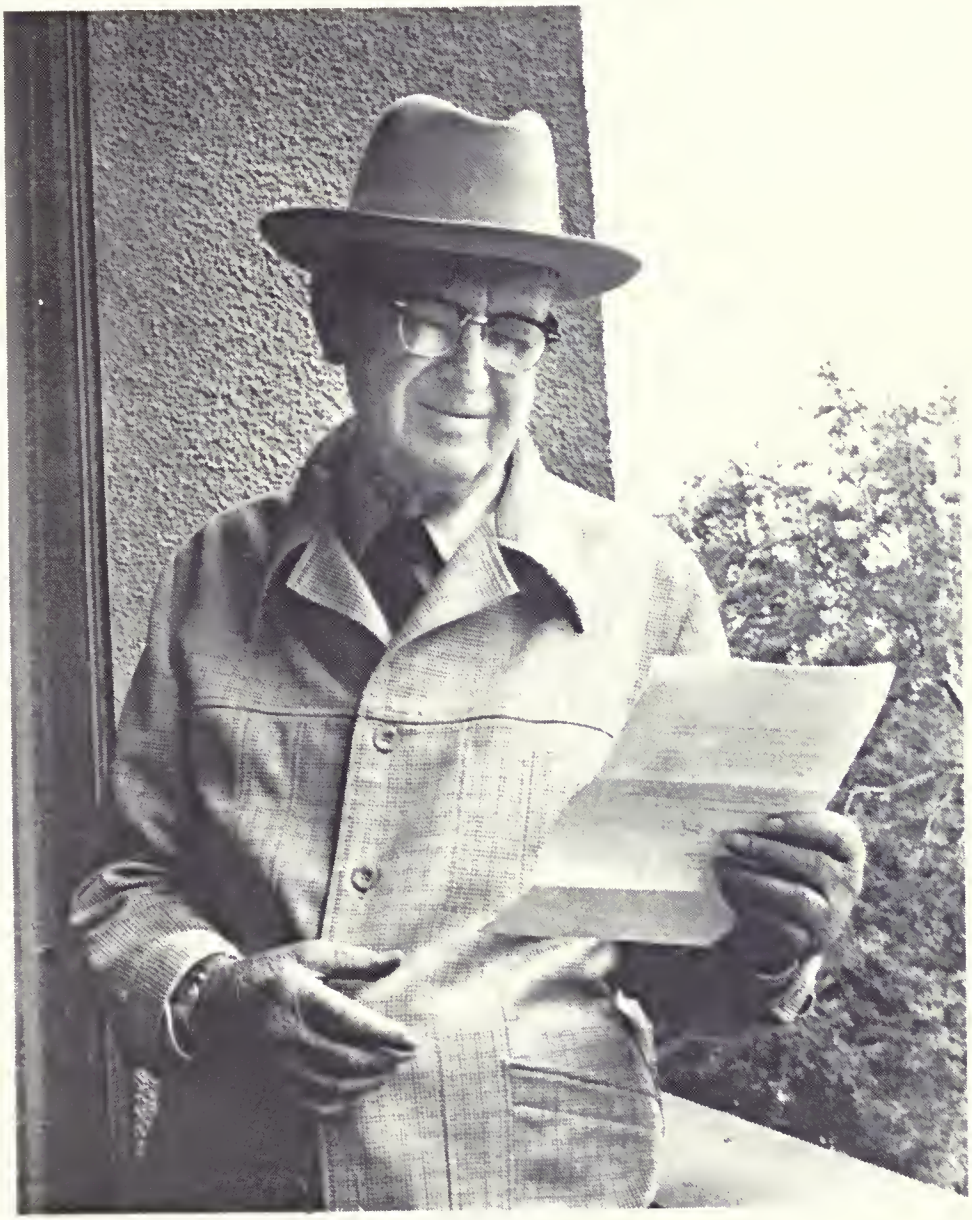

HORACE MARDEN ALBRIGHT
1976

Since 1954 the Regional Oral History Office has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of Northern California, the West,and the Nation. Oral history is a modern research technique involving an interviewee and an informed interviewer in spontaneous conversation. The taped record is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The resulting manuscript is typed in final form, indexed, bound with photographs and illustrative materials, and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

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Albright, Horace (1890-1987)) Mining executive

Mining Lawyer and Executive, U. S. Potash Company, U.S. Borax, 1933-1962 1989, xvi, 117 pp.

Recollections of early California mining; class of 1912, University of California; mining lawyers; leaving National Park Service in 1933 to become president of U.S. Potash Company; potash mining, Carlsbad, New Mexico; lowering workweek to fifty-two hours; hiring Hispanic workers; relations with mine unions. Contains excerpts from "Reminiscences of Horace Albright," interview done for Columbia University Oral History Office, 1962.

Introductions by Marian Albright Schenck (daughter); Amelia Fry (director, Earl Warren Project, Regional Oral History Office); James Gerstley (president, retired, U.S. Borax & Chemical Corporation).

Interview conducted 1986 by Eleanor Swent
Western Mining in the Twentieth Century Oral History Series

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Excerpt from the 29th Horace M. Albright Lecture in Conservation given by Henry J. Vaux at the University of California at Berkeley, 16 March 1989

PREFACE

The oral history series on Western Mining in the Twentieth Century documents the lives of leaders in mining, metallurgy, geology, education in the earth and materials sciences, mining law, and the pertinent government bodies. The field includes metal, non-metal, and industrial minerals, but not petroleum.

Mining has changed greatly in this century: in the technology and technical education; in the organization of corporations; in the perception of the national strategic importance of minerals; in the labor movement; and in consideration of health and environmental effects of mining.

The idea of an oral history series to document these developments in twentieth century mining had been on the drawing board of the Regional Oral History Office for more than twenty years. The project finally got underway on January 25, 1986, when Mrs. Willa Baum, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Bradley, Professor and Mrs. Douglas Fuerstenau, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Heimbucher, Mrs. Donald McLaughlin, and Mr. and Mrs. Langan Swent met at the Swent home to plan the project, and Professor Fuerstenau agreed to serve as Principal Investigator.

An advisory committee was selected which included representatives from the materials science and mineral engineering faculty and a professor of history of science at the University of California at Berkeley; a professor emeritus of history from the California Institute of Technology; and executives of mining companies.

We note with much regret the death of two members of the original advisory committee, both of whom were very much interested in the project. Rodman Paul, Professor Emeritus of History, California Institute of Technology, sent a hand-written note of encouragement just a few weeks before his death from cancer. Charles Meyer, Professor Emeritus of Geology, University of California at Berkeley, was not only an advisor but was also on the list of people to be interviewed, because of the significance of his recognition of the importance of plate tectonics in the genesis of copper deposits. His death in 1987 ended both roles.

Thanks are due to other members of the advisory committee who have helped in selecting interviewees, suggesting research topics, and raising funds.

Unfortunately, by the time the project was organized several of the original list of interviewees were no longer available and others were in failing health; therefore, arrangements for interviews were begun even without established funding.

The project was presented to the San Francisco section of the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers (AIME) on "Old-timers Night," March 10, 1986, when Philip Read Bradley, Jr. was the speaker. This section and the Southern California section provided initial funding and organizational sponsorship.

The Northern and Southern California sections of the Woman's Auxiliary to the AIME (WAAIME), the California Mining Association, and the Mining and Metallurgical Society of America (MMSA) were early supporters. Several alumni of the University of California College of Engineering donated in response to a letter from Professor James Evans, the chairman of the Department of Materials Science and Mineral Engineering. Other individual and corporate donors are listed in the volumes. The project is ongoing, and funds continue to be sought.

Some members of the AIME, WAAIME, and MMSA have been particularly helpful: Ray Beebe, Katherine Bradley, Henry Colen, Ward Downey, David Huggins, John Kiely, Noel Kirshenbaum, and Cole McFarland.

The first five interviewees were all born in 1904 or earlier. Horace Albright, mining lawyer and president of U.S. Borax and Chemical Corporation, was ninety-six years old when interviewed. Although brief, this interview will add another dimension to the many publications about a man known primarily as a conservationist.

James Boyd was director of the industry division of the military government of Germany after World War II, director of the U.S. Bureau of Mines, dean of the Colorado School of Mines, vice president of Kennecott Copper Corporation, president of Copper Range, and executive director of the National Commission on Materials Policy. He had reviewed the transcript of his lengthy oral history just before his death in November, 1987.

Philip Bradley, Jr., mining engineer, was a member of the California Mining Board for thirty-two years, most of them as chairman. He also founded the parent organization of the California Mining Association, as well as the Western Governors Mining Advisory Council.

Frank McQuiston, metallurgist, vice president of Newmont Mining Corporation, died before his oral history was complete; thirteen hours of taped interviews with him were supplemented by three hours with his friend and associate, Robert Shoemaker.

Gordon Oakeshott, geologist, was president of the National Association of Geology Teachers and chief of the California Division of Mines and Geology.

These oral histories establish the framework for the series; subsequent oral histories amplify the basic themes.

Future researchers will turn to these oral histories to learn how decisions were made which led to changes in mining engineering education, corporate structures, and technology, as well as public policy regarding minerals. In addition, the interviews stimulate the deposit, by interviewees and others, of a number of documents, photographs, memoirs, and other materials related to twentieth century mining in the West. This collection is being added to The Bancroft Library's extensive holdings.

The Regional Oral History Office is under the direction of Willa Baum, division head, and under the administrative direction of James D. Hart, director of The Bancroft Library.

Interviews were conducted by Malca Chall and Eleanor Swent.

Willa K. Baum, Division Head
Regional Oral History Office

Eleanor Swent, Project Director
Western Mining in the Twentieth
Century Series

1 May 1988
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Western Mining in the Twentieth Century Oral History Series
Interviews Completed or in Process, November 1989

Horace Albright, Mining Lawyer and Executive, U.S. Potash Company, U.S. Borax, 1933-1962, 1989

James Boyd, Minerals and Critical Materials Management: Military and Government Administrator and Mining Executive, 1941-1987, 1988

Philip Read Bradley, Jr., A Mining Engineer in Alaska, Canada, the Western United States, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, 1988

Catherine C. Campbell, Ian and Catherine Campbell, Geologists: Teaching, Government Service, Editing, 1989

Helen R. Henshaw, Recollections of Life with Paul Henshaw: Latin America, Homestake Mining Company, 1988

Lewis L. Huelsdonk, Manager of Gold and Chrome Mines, Spokesman for Gold Mining, 1935-1974, 1988

Frank Woods McQuiston, Jr., Metallurgist for Newmont Mining Corporation and U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, 1934-1982, 1989

Gordon B. Oakeshott, The California Division of Mines and Geology, 1948-1974, 1988

Samuel S. Arentz, Jr. (Escalante Mine), in process

Donald Dickey (Oriental Mine), in process

A. I. Johnson (Black Hills mining), in process

Evan Just (Engineering & Mining Journal, Cyprus Minerals, Stanford University), in process

Plato Malozemoff (Newmont Mining Corporation), in process

Langan Swent (San Luis, Homestake, uranium mining), in process

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INTRODUCTION by Amelia R. Fry

Because the processing of this, his final Regional Oral History Office [ROHO] transcript, coincides with the end of the life of Horace Marden Albright, a farewell more than an introduction is in order, partly for Horace and partly on behalf of his partnership with ROHO, which he made bloom steadily through the years. It should be said that the interview transcribed in this volume is different for another reason: it sidesteps Horace's role as "Mr. Conservation" (as Fortune Magazine once named him) to capture him as a businessman leading the U.S. Borax and Chemical Corporation.

He was born in 1890, which means that by the time historians were discovering the marvels of electronically recorded memoirs, as well as the growing field of resource conservation history, he was just the right age for being interviewed. He had behind him twenty years of leadership in the National Park Service, then several decades more as an outside catalyst for saving this earth and the life on it. It is small wonder that interviewers sought out this heroic figure more often than almost any other person in the United States. The open, friendly man from Inyo County, California, seemed to have been born for oral history. He had an uncanny memory for names and the pertinent anecdote as well as the ability to reel out candid narratives of complex controversies. With extraordinary accuracy he could recall in amazing detail how it came about that some of the most wondrous features on the face of this nation are still as beautiful as when she was young--places like the Grand Canyon and the Grand Tetons, to name just two.

He was called on to contribute to the Colonial Williamsburg Oral History Collection--one of the first studies of an event done by taping the participants of, in this case, the acquisition and preservation of an historic community. Columbia University also recorded a large autobiographical interview with him, as have many presidential libraries and conservation history projects. And so it went, through the sixties and seventies and into the eighties.

In 1961 the Regional Oral History Office also "discovered" this alumnus of the Berkeley campus. Today in The Bancroft Library his name shines forth from the royal blue spines of several ROHO oral histories, beginning with one in which he and another National Park director, his 1912 classmate Newton Drury, exchanged views about the national parks historic issues; they recorded that one jointly the day Horace was on the Berkeley campus to receive an LL.D. Over the years he also contributed an anecdotal interview about his classmate, California Governor and Chief Justice Earl Warren; another about UC Berkeley President Gordon Sproul; in addition, The Bancroft Library was able to barter a copy of Newton Drury's ROHO oral history in exchange for the autobiography that Horace had taped with the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University.

But it is his behind-the-scenes assistance that stands the tallest. It began when we discussed an idea--a wish--to produce more systematic oral histories by doing a series from several angles on one subject, documenting forest policy history with retired top executives of the U.S. Forest Service.

The most compelling fact, however, was that such a series would require supplemental funding, and for that Horace turned into consultant on the spot, guiding us along the unaccustomed trail of supplication and justification, and putting us in touch with Resources for the Future, Inc. in Washington, D.C., which he had chaired. When the incredible day arrived with ROHO's very first grant in its mail basket, Albright was as jubilant as we.

At that point he became a comrade-in-arms, and we gained insight into the strength of his sense that what is right is right; he had encouraged the whole process even though it concerned another land agency, one that was responsible for resource use rather then preservation and as such often had been his rival when acquiring western lands for parks.

Horace also helped with numerous small undertakings with phone calls and letters, such as introducing us to a fellow member of his remarkable Class of 1912 whom we considered fair game for interviewing, or guiding us to other pioneer officials of the Park Service whose interviews could complement those ROHO had. He even authored introductions to two interviews. The biggest challenge of all took shape as a shared but nebulous vision of an enormous series of interviews, a project that would cover many fields and decades documenting Chief Justice Earl Warren's life during his years as district attorney, attorney general, and governor, as well as the operations of political parties and the state government.

Albright agreed that this was crucial for the historiography of the period, but ROHO could not proceed until we had the chief justice's agreement to cooperate. Arranging a chance to talk with him--he was then still on the bench--was difficult, even with the help of the president of the university during Warren's brief visits to California. We did not compete well for his time with his children and grandchildren.

Then Horace apprised us that that very year, 1962, was the year of the fiftieth reunion of the Class of 1912, and Earl Warren himself was planning to attend. Here Horace and his wife, Grace (also a classmate), carried off a scenario for which we forever lament the absence of a video camera. On the big day, the ROHO offices turned into Communications Center, with hopeful interviewers hovering around the telephones while downstairs on Ground Zero (The Bancroft Library's elegant main rooms), well-dressed septuagenarians greeted each other at the refreshment tables. Horace stationed himself at the door waiting, of course, for Warren to walk through it.

Grace Albright was not among the guests, not yet. She was in charge of surveillance, and as the chief justice progressed peripatetically across campus, Grace repeatedly called in his position to ROHO. Finally, she phoned cryptically that he was heading for the Bancroft; then she hurried to the library as ROHO also evacuated to the punch bowl downstairs.

The plan worked, of course. Grace, only slightly out of breath, greeted the unsuspecting Earl Warren joyously, and Horace made introductions to his ROHO co-conspirators, who, nervous in their boldness, managed to explain their hopes that the chief justice would tape-record his memoirs. Yes, Horace put in, telling "Earl" he ought to get busy on such a project; he owed it to his

alma mater and adding (to our delight) that he knew ROHO always did a good job. Warren was smiling and agreeable, and invited correspondence to spell out the plan. We left feeling ten feet tall, but that was not the end of it for Horace. He knew that nailing down a specific date with the chief justice would be even more difficult. And he never let the matter drop whenever he was writing or talking to his classmate.

For instance, the next fall, in the unlikely location of the Island of Rhodes, the Earl Warrens happened to be cruising the Mediterranean with the Drew Pearsons and Katherine Graham. As Horace was hiking down the dry mountainside from the Acropolis, his unbelieving eyes targeted Earl Warren in a group of people in the distance. After the elation at such a coincidental meeting, Horace got right to the point, reminding Warren that he had promised to do an oral history project and reiterating that he owed it to his alma mater.

When the National Endowment for the Humanities offered ROHO a grant, but with the proviso that it must be matched with donations post haste, Horace helped supply names of persons to solicit. Once the project began, he was one who suggested persons to interview whom he knew had had long years of association with Earl Warren.

He did this even though to his distress the student sit-ins and quasi-military actions were besmirching the good name of the campus he so revered. In the beginning, much student opposition was fueled by the very 1964 Goldwater presidential campaign that Horace, a Republican, was working for--although his G.O.P. was closer to the Earl Warren variety and he could not agree with all of Goldwater's stands. [For instance, one day he explained to this writer his conviction that Goldwater's statements about dropping an atom bomb on Vietnam were dictated only for party unity with its conservatives and should not be taken seriously. His interpretation of Goldwater's statement was shared with this author during a visit in the Grand Tetons in the summer of 1964.] Horace felt that any student lucky enough to get a start in his or her life's work at the University of California (which then charged no tuition) was obligated--as he also had reminded Earl Warren--to do honor to that institution.

He seemed to feel this on both moral and practical levels. One day when visiting ROHO he shook his head in disbelief at the mess left behind after an outdoor sit-in against the war. In a speech in 1968 he took the occasion to insert the brief reminder that "...students in our day did not engage in rioting or otherwise disturb the tranquility of the university." [The speech is an address he delivered June 16, 1968, at a dinner in Eureka, California, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Save the Redwoods Leaque.] But even though loyalty was out of fashion, Horace's own commitment remained unshaken both to the University and to our office. In his nineties and battling against arthritis and bad vision as he typed on his old portable typewriter, he still worked to help ROHO with its difficulties in launching some interviews with leaders in mining.

We developed deep respect and love for this man, for the same reasons people everywhere have. Whether in the wildlife preserves of Africa or the

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We developed deep respect and love for this man, for the same reasons people everywhere have. Whether in the wildlife preserves of Africa or the

board rooms at Rockefeller Center or the crowded offices of ROHO, he was intelligent enough to cut through to underlying problems, and he always cared enough to help. Horace would never have thought of himself as a teacher; however, he did teach people. He was a walking, breathing model of the confidence which lent enthusiasm to his work once he believed a goal was justified. To us, he carried an exposed wisdom of how one accepts frustrations with the pace of bureaucratic procedure without losing a sincere respect for the institution. He seemed to revive a tired truism with his Inyo County "pioneer individualism" that triggered his inner warning button when a line of limitations had been breached, when it was time to say, "Enough." And he taught us how to keep in mind the next step.

Horace's own next step he once outlined to this writer so that she could help in approaching the National Geographic for a public presentation. The idea of it was born when he opened a 1966, all-California issue of the National Geographic and saw that the eastern slope of the Sierras, his back yard so strung with natural jewels, had been treated rather lightly. In his direct way, he simply told his longtime friend Melville Grosvenor of the National Geographic about the error in judgment, but that was not the end.

The more Horace thought about it, the more concretely a plan formed, one of stunning dimensions for the National Park system and for the valley walled by the highest mountain ranges in the contiguous states, Owens Valley. The child Horace had watched its farms reduced to dust when its river's waters were diverted to the City of Los Angeles.

"It was a lovely valley to me in my childhood," said Horace in 1966. "Now it has no future except recreation." It was time to give it that raison d'etre, Horace said. Take the entire stretch of incredible California landscape east of the Sierras from Death Valley up through Alpine County and Mono Lake--an area longer than the Washington-Boston corridor but with a fraction of the population--and make it into one huge, grandly diverse national recreation area.

Ninety-five percent of the land was already in some sort of government ownership, mostly federal, Horace pointed out, and Death Valley National Monument was a natural nucleus. He among all people knew well the contention inherent in transferring lands from one federal agency to another. But the variety! Horace described how people hike and climb among mountain ranges that tower well over 10,000 feet and ski most of the months of the year in the resorts. They fish and hunt in an abundance of creeks and forested moraines of incredible beauty. They swim or boat the year around in the lower, warmer valleys. The ancient Indian sites and old mining ghost towns are fascinating historic areas, and the diminishing herd of tule elk roam his valley. This vision glowed with possibility for Horace. It could be a playground par excellence for America, California's ultimate gift to the nation.

This particular "next step" of Horace's was never realized. We did present an article plan, but the decision at National Geographic carried some irrefutable logic; namely that in fairness to "other parts of the nation," the magazine could not return to California with another large story in the near future. [Correspondence between National Geographic and Amelia Fry, late

1966, and notes on conversations with Horace Albright, 1966, in possession of this author.]

But he did succeed with another "next step," which admittedly he had been "resisting for fifty years," and he accomplished it at age ninety-five. With Robert Cahn, Horace co-authored his final book, The Birth of the National Park Service. [Horace Albright as told to Robert Cahn, The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913-33, (Salt Lake City: Howe Brothers, Institute of the American West books, v.2) 1985.] Cahn is a leading writer on conservation and as patient and persistent as Albright. Over a period of many years, visit by visit, Cahn and his wife, Pat, tape-recorded Albright's detailed memory, then as a team added their research and editorial talents. It is a cohesive reconstitution of Horace's ground-level view of the first twenty years of the National Park Service's life, truly its Albright Years--although Horace would never have agreed to such a name.

Like that era of the national parks, ROHO's crucial first-growth years will always rest on our Albright Years, too, those very critical ones from 1961 to his death in 1987.

Amelia R. Fry
Project Director, Earl Warren Project
Regional Oral History Office

February 1989
Washington, D.C.

INTRODUCTION by James M. Gerstley

I first met Horace Albright in New York in 1933. I had been working in San Francisco and was returning to England with my parents, who had been visiting my mother's family in San Francisco. My father, James Gerstley, was a senior executive with Borax Consolidated Ltd. of London and invited Horace Albright to dinner, as Horace was about to leave his post as director of the National Park Service to become general manager of United States Potash Company, a company in which BCL had a 50 percent interest.

The United States Potash Company had been formed to mine and process the potassium ore which had been discovered near Carlsbad, New Mexico, by accident by the firm of Snowden & McSweeny while drilling for oil. The American subsidary of BCL--the Pacific Coast Borax Company--had heard of this discovery, reported it to BCL who offered to finance and operate the necessary plant and, as a result, after negotiations, had acquired its interest in USP. In those days potash lands could only be leased from the U.S. government and it was felt that someone with proven government experience should be one of the top executives of the company.

Horace Albright's father--George Albright--had for many years worked in Candelaria, Nevada, as a carpenter and engineer at the Northern Belle mine. There he had met and become friends with Christian Brevoort Zabriskie and together they had served as Candelaria's only coffin-builders and undertakers under the name "A to Z Company." Zabriskie later joined the Pacific Coast Borax Company and rose to become its general manager, with R.C. Baker--managing director of BCL--as president. Horace Albright, after joining what was then called the Bureau of National Parks, went to Yellowstone as superintendent of that park and field director of the bureau from 1919 to 1929. It was in Yellowstone that he first met Baker, who was on a visit with Zabriskie, and it was undoubtedly Zabriskie, who had known the Albright family for years, who introduced Horace to Baker. Baker saw Horace on later business trips and it is not surprising that BCL turned to Horace when it was decided that someone familiar with government operations should become general manager of USP. At the same time, since Horace was a staunch Republican and had served under Coolidge and Hoover, he was not happy when Roosevelt with Ickes as Secretary of the Interior came into office, and so welcomed the opportunity of leaving Washington.

I joined Pacific Coast Borax Company in 1933 at its headquarters in Los Angeles after Frank Jenifer had succeeded Zabriskie as general manager. Jenifer was invited to become a member of the board of USP. Horace became president of USP when McSweeney, the first president, died, and I was invited to become a member of the board after Jenifer died in 1950.

A New Mexican company had to abide by the rule that there be an interval of at least one hour after the nomination of directors to allow the counting of ballots. This was a farce in our case as we had only four stockholders, three of whom were on the board and the fourth was BCL. However, we had to obey the law, so Horace used to entertain us with films of national parks. I can only recall these meetings as some of the longest and most boring I ever

had to attend. We were also taken on almost every visit to see the famous Carlsbad Caverns.

While Horace was not a businessman of wide experience, he was an able administrator, well liked by his staff and associates, and was willing to listen to people with more business or technical experience. He had a good sense of humor and was invaluable when it came to handling governmental matters of which there were many.

In 1956 it was decided that the Pacific Coast Borax Company should become an independent American company and that it should take over the United States Potash Company by merger. As a result, the United States Borax & Chemical Corporation came into existence and I became its first president and Horace became one of my directors. He and his wife, Grace, soon afterwards moved from New York to California. Grace died in 1980 and Horace in 1987, and until his death his mind and recollection seemed almost as good as when he was much younger.

James M. Gerstley
President (retired)
U.S. Borax and Chemical Corporation

April 1989
Atherton, California

INTRODUCTION by Marian Albright Schenck

Horace Albright always regarded his life's work and accomplishments as a twist of fate. For the first twenty-four years of his life, his ambition was to be involved in some way with mining. In his boyhood years it was to follow in the footsteps of his hero, grandfather Horace Marden, who had come from Maine to California via the Isthmus of Nicaragua in 1851. Of course, Marden's call was GOLD, and, until he was nearly seventy years of age, he followed the rise and fall of the gold and then the silver strikes--Columbia, Mokelumne Hill, Aurora, etc. He combined mining with trucking in supplies to the camps, managing stamp mills, even lumbering. Albright's father, George, was also drawn to the excitement of the mines, coming from his native Canada in 1873 to work as a millwright in Virginia City. Only after the 1890 birth of his eldest son, Horace, did he settle down in Bishop, California to build houses, operate a mill and even become the town's undertaker!

So young Horace Albright grew up with these two strong men, listening to the tales of the Gold Rush days, meeting the old-timers who came to visit. Mining was an exciting, living thing! But there was one great difference. He wanted to go to college, become a lawyer, a mining lawyer. And he did just that, graduating in the class of 1912 from the University of California at Berkeley and entering its law school, Boalt Hall.

Now this is where the twist of fate comes in. One of Horace's law professors was Will Colby, and he not only whipped up Horace's interest in mining law, but he began to take the young man around with him to meetings of the Sierra Club, introducing him to John Muir and his philosophy and finally swaying him to accept an offer of Adolph Miller, a fellow professor at Berkeley. Miller, who had been appointed Assistant Secretary of the Interior in 1913, suggested to Albright that he come to Washington with him, to accept a position as private secretary to Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane. Horace went to his mentor, Colby, who convinced him that he could finish law school back East, get vast experience in governmental affairs, and then return after a year or two and join his law firm in San Francisco.

And everything went according to plan--until one day in December 1914 when he was introduced to Stephen T. Mather. Miller had left the Interior Department to help set up the Federal Reserve system. Mather had replaced him. And Mather's goals were set on doing something about the national parks, which were orphans adrift in the Interior Department. Lane suggested that the young attorney Albright could help Mather--for one year only--force a bill through the Congress to establish a National Park Service bureau to administer these federal areas. It was an enormous decision to be made by young Albright--but the power of Mather's personality overcame his inclination to go home to California, the dream of his lifetime to be involved in the fascinating world of mining. Instead he turned his future toward national parks, conservation, preservation of historic sites. Horace Albright became a founder with Mather of the National Park Service, architect for parks here in America and around the world and the man who brought the federal government into the realm of historic preservation. But here is the twist of fate once more.

Albright was director of the National Park Service when he left government service in 1933 to become the president of United States Potash Company, a mining company of New Mexico. Who had led him into this position? None other than Chris Zabriskie, who headed a sister company directed by the same British corporation. And who was Chris Zabriskie? He had been a partner of George Albright back in the 1880s in Candelaria, Nevada days when they had a business--"A TO Z WE DO EVERYTHING."

During his business career and to the end of his long life at ninety-seven years, Horace Albright was honored for his interest in mining with various university degrees. He was also given the Medal of Freedom by the president of the United States, the highest gift a grateful nation can bestow on a civilian, for his lifelong dedication to preserving America much as he had found it in the Sierra mountains of California in 1890.

Marian Albright Schenck

October 1988
Studio City, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Horace Albright was selected as one of the first in the oral history series on Western Mining in the Twentieth Century; he represents mining lawyers and executives. He also encouraged and advised on the series. He had long been a friend to the Regional Oral History Office; in her introduction to him, Amelia Roberts Fry details this warm relationship.

She interviewed him because of his fame as a conservationist. [Horace Marden Albright and Newton Bishop Drury, Comments on Conservation, 1900 to 1960, an interview conducted by Amelia Roberts Fry, 1962.] His training, however, was in mining law and he had a twenty-nine-year career as a mining executive.

"I was educated as a mining lawyer, and you get mining in your blood," he says. "My grandfather and father were mining men....wherever I went, I liked to see mines, go into mines, look at the mines." So he explains his departure from the directorship of the National Park Service in 1933 to become acting president, and later president, of the first successful potash mining venture in the Western Hemisphere, a pioneer in mining and refining, in reducing the work week from fifty-six hours, and in non-discriminatory labor policies. James Gerstley, president of U.S. Borax and Chemical Corporation when Albright was a director, introduces him in this role, and explains the successive changes of name of the company, from U.S. Potash to Pacific Coast Borax to U.S. Borax.

Horace Albright had a birthright connection with mining; his grandfathers Albright and Marden both came to the California gold districts in 1851. His mother was born at Mokelumne Hill; his father worked in the mines at Bishop, California, and Candelaria, Nevada. A poignant reminder of how much times have changed is that his mother was one of three surviving from a family of nine; one died of typhoid fever and four died within ten days, of diphtheria. He considers his grandfather's success in terms of the fine grave markers he was able to provide for his family.

After graduating in mining from the University of California with the celebrated class of 1912, Horace Albright studied mining law until he went to Washington to work on legislation which resulted in the establishment of the National Park Service.

In connection with the twenty-ninth Horace Albright Lecture in Conservation at the University of California at Berkeley on March 16, 1989, Henry J. Vaux said, "Horace Albright saw no philosophical conflict between mining and National Parks, provided you did not try to locate them both in the same place. He had a profound commitment to future generations, but also perceived that that commitment could not be met without also meeting legitimate needs of the present. This humanistic view offered a framework which could accommodate the apparent conflicts between the two phases of his career."

Horace Albright was interviewed on February 8, 1986 in a convalescent home in Studio City, California. There was distraction from fellow patients

calling for medication and aides bringing water; it was far from an ideal situation for tape-recording. I suspect that I was more nervous about his advanced age (ninety-six years) than he was. He was completely alert, and except for dryness of the mouth had no difficult with the mechanics of the interview. He was working on a book based on his correspondence with Harold Ickes, former secretary of the interior, and had books and papers piled neatly around him in the small room.

It was fortunate that my husband was present at first, because Mr. Albright seemed uneasy talking about mining to a woman. When he found that my husband was a mining engineer, and that I understood something of the business, he talked more comfortably. Much has been said about the amiability of Horace Albright, and I regret that I could not have known him longer. He was extremely gracious to me and to the orderly and aides on duty. In a situation where many old people regret their loss of independence, he retained his dignity.

He died on March 29, 1987, and did not review the transcript of this interview, which was lightly edited for clarity, so we cannot know whether he might have altered any of it. The tapes of the interview are deposited in The Bancroft Library.

The bulk of his papers are in the Department of Special Collections at the University of California at Los Angeles . The University of California at Berkeley has been the grateful recipient of personal memorabilia from undergraduate days, including Horace Albright's class hats and Grace Albright's dance cards from courtship days. Marian Albright Schenk, their daughter, has donated other documents which are in the mining archive of The Bancroft Library; she also wrote a personal introduction for this volume and contributed the memorial from a Japanese colleague of her father's.

We thank Dr. Ronald Grele, director of the Columbia University Oral History Office, for permission to include in this volume a pertinent section from The Reminiscences of Horace M. Albright, an interview conducted in 1962 by William Ingersoll.

We also thank Joe Kern, manager of corporate archives, U.S. Borax, for making photographs available, as well as for contributing other materials for the mining archive.

Horace Albright has been the subject of many books, articles, films, and interviews, and this volume is presented as an affectionate final tribute to his total persona as a pre-eminent Californian.

Eleanor Swent
Interviewer-Editor

10 March 1989
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

HORACE ALBRIGHT

Interview, February 8, 1986
Studio City, California

Interviewer: Eleanor Swent
Also present: Langan Swent

I CHANGES IN MINING LAW AND EDUCATION##

E. Swent: Mr. Albright, you were involved for a long time with the American Mining Congress.

Albright: Who's the head of that now?

L. Swent: John Knebel is the new head.

Albright: He's taken the place that Julian Conover used to have.

L. Swent: Yes. Julian Conover retired as executive director of the American Mining Congress many years ago, and then Allen Overton took Julian Conover's place, and Allen Overton is up for retirement this year.

Albright: Is that so? Just the one fellow in between? I knew Overton. The United States Chamber of Commerce had a man named Smith, handled all our mining needs and so forth. I was very active in that kind of mining, but actually, I was not a miner. I was a mining lawyer.

L. Swent: There are a lot of lawyers who got to the top of mining companies.

Albright: I don't know who's the principal mining lawyer now, but in my day there were just two or three of them. There was Costigan over in Denver, and Curtis Lindley and Will Colby in San Francisco, and Theodore Martin in Los Angeles. Theodore Martin was a mining lawyer. He was very distinguished; he wrote one of the books on mining law. Lindley on Mines was the principal one; that was the book we used in law school.

L. Swent: He was a distant relative of mine.

Albright: Oh, was he? The one who wrote the law book? Well, he was the foremost writer on mining and his partner, Will Colby, was the top man in the Sierra Club, the secretary of it for twenty or thirty years, and he was our professor at the University of California. He was my law professor, teaching mining law and water law.

L. Swent: Water law is getting very complex now.

Albright: Well, mines are on the way out, aren't they?

L. Swent: Mining law, as far as claims go, and the conflict of claims and titles and all this, is not a very big business nowadays.

Albright: No, Kennecott's on the way out, and the iron mines--. Even potash is going out of the United States; it's mostly in Canada.

L. Swent: Most of the old titles have gotten settled, so most of the mining law now is basically a variety of business law.

Albright: They aren't educating mining engineers any more, are they? They're mineralogists or geologists or people that deal with a particular mineral.

L. Swent: The educational lines are much more specialized.

Albright: Well, do they call them mining engineers?

L. Swent: Oh yes, they still graduate mining engineers too. But there's an awful lot of knowledge out there now.

Albright: You're a mining engineer?

L. Swent: Somewhat. I'm retired as an employee with Homestake Mining Company and I have a consulting agreement with them whereby they gave me a retainer and if I work more hours than the retainer, I bill them for the difference. They've just turned me loose to work with the Mining Congress.

Albright: You probably know more about it than I do. I don't see why your wife doesn't interview you instead of me.

L. Swent: She wants to do that.

E. Swent: I will, I will.

Albright: I got a letter from Willa Baum of the Oral History Office up there, that they were going to undertake a study of mining, and I assumed it was only mining in relation to the university. The whole industry, well, you've got a hold of something there.

Of course the university benefited from mining, but they didn't start the university until the California rush was over. In 1868, it was pretty well gone, the old mining rush, but there were mining people who came from there, and of course the Hearst was a mining fortune. People think of Hearst as a publishing fortune, but it's a mining fortune. The big center, and the

Albright: mining building at the university, and the women's dormitories, and many other things came from the philanthropy of Mrs. George Hearst, Phoebe Hearst.

L. Swent: My wife went to Hearst Kindergarten.

E. Swent: Phoebe Hearst endowed the kindergarten in Lead, South Dakota, that I went to.

Albright: Oh, you were in Lead. I've been through the mines at Lead. Now they've got a new mining property up in California here they named after Don McLaughlin. Don and I were in college together. I was two years ahead of him. He just died recently. But he was head of Homestake for a while.

L. Swent: I knew Don since I was about that high. He was a good friend of my father's.

Albright: I've known him since he was in college, of course. His wife too. The second wife, Sylvia. Sylvia was down here about a month ago. I autographed one of these books for her.

L. Swent: That was nice. Well, I'll let you get started. I'm kind of interfering here.

Albright: No, I think you'd do a better job of this than I do because I was just on the outskirts, you know. I just gave her a short background of my interest in mines, how it started. My grandfather came across the Isthmus of Nicaragua in 1851. He missed the gold rush by two years. Your wife will pardon me if I quote--you probably know this as well as I do, and even better; you probably know more of it, the old poem:

> The miners came in forty-nine,
> The whores in fifty-one;
> And when they got together,
> They had a Native Son. [laughter]

There was a long poem about that, but that's the only section I can remember. It's just as well I'd forgotten that.

L. Swent: Did you read the book by James Holliday, The World Rushed In? It's very well done.

Albright: No, I haven't. If you'd asked me what book you should read, not knowing about this one, I would have talked about John Hays Hammond's book. A big thick book. I knew him in his retired years in Washington. He built that magnificent home; I guess it's the French Embassy.

E. Swent: He made a great fortune from mining.

Albright: Whew! Well, many of them made fortunes. The Floods and the Mills and a good many of them made fortunes. I don't think my own grandfather did; and yet on the other hand, he sent two girls to college and he's got marble statues for the children up in the Aurora cemetery. My grandfather was in Aurora.

L. Swent: I don't think the oral history group wants to go back into the gold rush history; that's been pretty well documented.

Albright: It seems to me so, yes. I couldn't help on that anyway. I wasn't around for that.

L. Swent: The California history of mining has not been documented very much since 1933, and there've been lots of changes since 1933. This is sort of the area that they want to concentrate on.

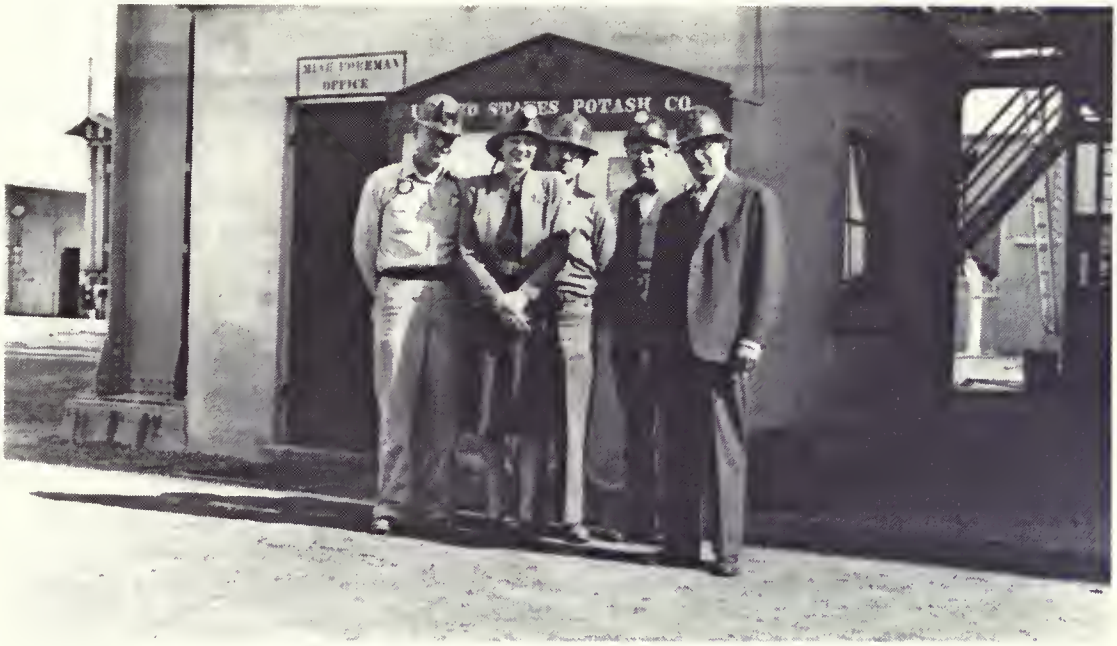
Albright: Well, they wouldn't get anything out of me on that because I was--well, I was in the American Mining Congress, and then I was president of the United States Potash.

II U.S. POTASH, 1933-1962

E. Swent: When did you leave your position as director of the National Park Service to go with U.S. Potash?

Albright: In 1933. Snowden and McSweeney were oil exploration people, that discovered this potash about 1925, discovered it drilling oil. Oil people didn't know anything about mining, and so they scouted around and tried to get a mining company to undertake this exploration and development. They took it up with Kennecott and another mining company, and eventually with the old Pacific Coast Borax Company, at that time controlled in England. They were mining in Death Valley by that time; they hadn't left there yet. They had tried to do a little potash in the first World War, so they knew quite a bit about potash.

They studied it, and their mining engineer, Clarence Rasor, recommended that they undertake the development of that mine. They bought half the common stock of the United States Potash Company, which the oil company organized. They also agreed to undertake the financing and development of the mine and the refinery.



Left to right: J.G. Horne, Mine Superintendent; Mrs. Gertrude Stiehler, Assistant Secretary; Colwell A. Pierce, General Superintendent; Horace Albright, President and General Manager; Paul Speer, Vice President and General Counsel. Carlsbad, New Mexico, c. 1946.

Photograph courtesy U.S. Borax Corporate Archives

Left to right: (first man and woman are unidentified): Tom Cramer, Vice President U.S. Potash; Rose Smith, wife of a New Mexico State Legislator; Horace Albright, President U.S. Potash; Mrs. C.A. Pierce; John E. Miles, Governor of New Mexico; Mrs. Tom Cramer; C.A. Pierce, Superintendent U.S. Potash. Refinery of U.S. Potash Company in Carlsbad, New Mexico, 1947.

Photograph coursey of Marion Albright Schenck

Executive Head of an Independent Company

Albright: Then of course came the question, who's going to run it? And the reason why they picked on me was--well, they never told me. It just so happened that the vice president in charge of the Borax Company in the United States, Chris Zabriskie, was a close friend of my father's in the early days of Candelaria, Nevada. I had been in touch with him all the time. And Mr. Mather, who was first head of the Park Service, had made a fortune in borax mining, at a mine near Manchester. You see, they had sold because they had lost the ore.

At any rate, some of these borax people had seen my management of Yellowstone Park. They also knew about my education and my many years in the Interior Department, my background in mining, and my education in mining law--I was a lawyer by that time--and my knowledge of the Interior Department, and my connections in Washington. Also of course I knew New Mexico very well; that's where the discovery was made. They put all those things together, and they decided if I'd take the position, to offer it to me. And they did; they offered it to me every year for three years while they were building the mine and so forth.

I had things to do as head of the Park Service, and I couldn't accept. But after Roosevelt was elected in 1932, they thought that I might be willing to leave the government then. Well, by that time, I'd accomplished about all I wanted to accomplish anyway. Besides that, I had two children to educate, and salaries for the government were horrible, you know, so after Roosevelt was elected, I said, well, I have two or three things to do, I don't want to go now, but if you want to hold it open a little longer, I might.

Well, they held it open another year, and I accomplished what I wanted to in the Roosevelt administration. They asked me to stay, so my severing the connection was purely voluntary; it had nothing to do with politics. I resigned, and took the position.

It was a very unusual kind of position because I was to be the executive head of an entirely independent company. It didn't belong to Snowden-McSweeney, and didn't belong to Pacific Coast Borax. It belonged to both of them, but I was to be independent.

The president of Snowden-McSweeney, a man named Henry McSweeney, was a very wealthy man already. He had been an attorney for John D. Rockefeller at one time. He wanted to stay president; he just had a feeling that he wanted to be president. He wasn't going to get any pay; he'd have to pay his own expenses; all the emoluments of the presidency were mine. They all tried to get him to take the chairmanship, and let me be president, but no,

Albright: he liked the title of president. He said I could be chairman if I wanted to. I said, well, if I can't be president, I'd rather be vice president and general manager.

L. Swent: Where was it headquartered?

Albright: New York. That's where McSweeney was, so was Pacific Coast Borax, all there. But I was out in New Mexico a great deal of the time because we were far and away the first ones in there, you know. The Potash Company of America came in about 1934, the others came in after that. But we were the first ones there.

We opened up the potash mine. In 1946, Mr. McSweeney died. He was about eighty-five years old, and never had anything to do with the company except at board meetings. And he was not very good at that because he was very deaf, he couldn't hear what went on, and he just didn't know much about it. Of course, he cashed in on the dividend all right. When he died, they made me president, and I was president for the last ten years.

Then in 1956, we merged the company with the borax company, and changed the name to United States Borax and Chemical. That's the name now. They're here; their headquarters are here. In the meantime, they've quit mining in Death Valley and they're mining up near Boron, the big open pit mine. Just after that I was hired as a consultant and a director of U.S. Borax and Chemical; that's the last position I had. I retired from that in 1962. I was seventy-two years old then.

Right after that, they hired Ronald Reagan as their television announcer, you know. He announced the "Death Valley Days" on the television for two or three years. When he was nominated for governor, the conservationists were afraid he wouldn't be a good park man or a good forest man and he'd do things contrary to conservation, so they had an agreement that somebody had to talk to Reagan, and acquaint him with the principles of conservation, because he was just an actor, he wasn't supposed to know anything about conservation. I was selected to instruct Reagan, and so just after he was nominated as governor, I had nearly all afternoon with him. I supplied him with literature and with a discussion of all the problems of conservation that I could think of, and we got along fine. But I don't talk about being Ronald Reagan's advisor at all. He was good on conservation, and he did all right as president.

E. Swent: Was there any conflict between parks and mining when you were with the Park Service?

Albright: No, the only time we ever had any discussion of mining was with tungsten. During the first war, and again in the second war. There was a little tungsten in the upper reaches of Yosemite, and

Albright: they wanted to make sure that if they ran out of tungsten, over there in back of Bishop where they mined tungsten, that they could go in there, but they never did. There was no mining in the national parks in either war. So I never had that problem. I never had any problem so far as the mines were concerned.

E. Swent: And of course when you were in the mining business, you didn't have a problem with conservationists.

Albright: No, but the conservationists counted on me, in mining, to influence keeping mining out. Which I did. When anybody talked about looking for mines in the parks, you could depend on me opposing it. But I can't remember of any serious efforts to get in there in the mining. There never was mineral in the parks to any extent, so far as I know. Of course we had a long fight with Senator Cameron in Grand Canyon where he tried to get control of the Grand Canyon with mining claims. We had several years of contest with him. Had him up to the Supreme Court twice. But he was in there before we had a Park Service.

L. Swent: There's a uranium mine developed in the fifties.

Albright: Uranium, yes, uranium, just one lode development--they finally got rid of that. They couldn't buy it, but they ran out of uranium on their claim, so the way the Park Service got control of it, they gave them permission to mine a little more under the government land, in return for the whole property. So the government owns it all now; there's no mining anywhere now. Well, he knows more about mining that I do. The best I can do for you I think, and for your office--I'm very much interested in that office there.

L. Swent: Did you know William Penn Mott, who's now head of the Park Service?

Albright: Oh, sure. I've known him for twenty-five years. He's been in here to see me several times. Do you know him?

L. Swent: Yes.

Albright: He's a first-class fellow. He was Reagan's park man. And I think Reagan was responsible for him being where he is now. He's seventy-six years old, that's the only thing about him. He'll have to be looking for a successor.

L. Swent: I saw him the other day; he gave a talk at the Oakland Rotary Club, and he seems quite energetic.

Albright: Oh, he's a first-class fellow, but seventy-six. They had a little joke about him taking the job. He was seventy-five when he took it, and they said, if they want an old man as head of the Park Service, who don't they get Albright? He's older, and he's had

Albright: more experience. I'm twenty years older than he is. [laughter]

L. Swent: Let's see. You started out in New Mexico as U.S. Potash, and then merged and became U.S. Chemical and Borax. And then that merged and became U.S. Borax.

Albright: United States Borax, which is what it is now. U.S. Borax and Chemical. Now it's a part of Rio Tinto, a big conglomerate, it's got about 200 companies in it.

L. Swent: Did you have some serious problems with the Internal Revenue Service?

Albright: No, they were indicted before I was with them, when they were still independent. They were indicted for anti-trust. They proved something on them with American Potash and Chemical, up here at Trona, and they had to sign a consent decree, but they haven't been in any trouble that I know of.

L. Swent: My father testified as an expert witness for a potash company in a tax hearing in New York.

Albright: Oh, Potash Company had some trouble on depletion I think. I remember hiring both Don McLaughlin and Will Colby.

L. Swent: I think that's the one.

Albright: But that was way back, that was back in the thirties.

L. Swent: Yes. I remember I dropped in at the trial one day when I was on my way to school, and I graduated in 1933.

Albright: Where'd you graduate from?

L. Swent: Moses Brown School, a prep school in Providence, Rhode Island. On my way to it one year, I stopped in New York and listened to some of the testimony.

Albright: That must have been the one; it's the only one I remember.

III REMINISCENCE

Well-known Mining Families--Cramer, Boyd, Searls

L. Swent: The person that my dad knew was Tom Cramer.

Left: Horace Albright
President, U.S. Potash.

Portrait of Horace Albright
by Robert Walton

Below: Mrs. Gertrude Stiehler, Jay Ford, Horace Albright, Paul Speer, Walter Dingley, Dean Gidney, Thomas Cramer. Officers of U.S. Potash Company, 1955.

Albright: Tom Cramer, yes, he was vice president. He was my man in charge in Carlsbad.

L. Swent: I knew him, and my dad thought very highly of him.

Albright: You know his son has just retired as chief engineer of Standard of California? Dudley Cramer. Yes! Chief engineer! I remember in high school, there were two boys down there in Carlsbad, in the same class, and they were always competing on their grades, Dudley Cramer, and the other was Robert--oh, I don't remember what his name was, but his father was in the insurance business. [interruption to get water from orderly] That's another one of those failures, you know. I have trouble with a dry mouth. I don't know if they've told you or not, but I'm ninety-six years old.

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I don't know why I can't think of that name; you know, it shows I'm getting old. Well, let's drop that one for a moment.

There were three or four families that were in mining and were interested in the Mining Congress. I know we used to get together and discuss our families. And of course there were oil people. Pauley, Pauley Pavilion and so forth, he was an oil man. I don't know whether Doheny or some of those Standard people were in oil or not, but I think oil is regarded as a mining operation, isn't it?

L. Swent: Well, they're in the AIME [American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers] now.

Albright: They have their own organization, don't they?

L. Swent: The American Petroleum Institute. But now, petroleum engineers are a part of the AIME.

Albright: I used to belong to that too. Do you belong?

L. Swent: Oh, yes; I still do.

Albright: I took the magazine for years. Do you know Jim Boyd?

L. Swent: Oh yes.

Albright: He comes in here occasionally. He's up in Carmel now. His father was chief engineer of the borax company.

L. Swent: Jim was born in Australia.

Albright: They were born in Australia, yes. They had a great joke about his

Albright: father, Julian Boyd, when he came up. He was a mining engineer, and was hired as chief engineer for Pacific Coast Borax. They introduced him around as Mr. Byrd, and he couldn't say "Byrd." He'd say, "The name is not Boyd; it's Boyd." They played that joke on him for a long time.

But Jim I think is one of the smartest mining men I ever knew. Of course he was drafted right away in the war, made a full colonel. His job was to procure minerals. When the war was over, they took him to Germany, to make a study of the situation of the German mines. He came back early in 1946, but nobody knew he was back. He came back to the School of Mines, where he had been, in Golden, Colorado.

The Mining Congress was holding its convention in Denver, and I was presiding at the first meeting, a luncheon, in the Brown Palace, and sitting up at the table, the man who was going to speak at the luncheon, was the Secretary of the Interior, Julius Krug. He succeeded Ickes in Roosevelt's cabinet. The fellows were coming in to the luncheon, and I saw coming through the door, there was Jim Boyd. So I said to Krug, sitting next to me, "Mr. Secretary, you know Jim Boyd, don't you? You must have known him during the war."

"Sure," he said, "he's in Germany."

I said, "No, he isn't. I think he just came in here. I thought he was in Germany, too."

"My gosh," he said, "if he's here, I want to see him."

So when I took over at the end of the meal, and took care of the introductions, I asked if Colonel James Boyd was there, would he please come up to the head table. Well, he promptly came up there. Krug was tickled to death to see him. He right away took him back to Washington as an assistant, and then he made him director of the Bureau of Mines. That was all in 1946. Afterwards he went out with Copper Range, and he stayed there until he retired.

His first wife, the mother of four children, four sons, died. They retired to the Watergate apartment in Washington. After she died, after a year or two, he married again. That's when he moved to Carmel; he's in Carmel now.

L. Swent: We saw him at the California Mining Association in Monterey. Do you have any suggestions on people that should be interviewed in this project?

Albright: I would certainly interview Boyd. He's had all the honors that can come to a mining man, and he's a very brilliant fellow. I

Albright: think he'd enjoy meeting and talking with you.

Another mining family is Searls. Fred Searls was chief engineer and president of Newmont. The next one, in my class, became a rancher up around Tracy. So far as I know he was always in ranching. Then Carroll was attorney for Newmont, in New York. A very wonderful fellow. I know he's dead now. Bob Searls was a mining lawyer in San Francisco. The youngest one is a doctor, and I think he's in Eureka. Fred was in the class of 1909, and I don't know if he's alive.

L. Swent: He was a good friend of my dad's and I think he's dead now.

Albright: They kept the old homestead in Nevada City, and they kept it always available. They had a housekeeper, and any time one of the boys wanted to go there and take a vacation, it was always there. That was true clear up until the '70s. I stopped there in the early '70s and it was still running.

I think that there's a good story for your office in what the mining fortunes, and the men who had them, what they did for the university. The university didn't start until 1868. Mainly it was the Hearsts of course.

Another place where you might at least get some atmosphere--do you know about E Clampus Vitus? Oh, gosh--E Clampus Vitus was a fun society back in the early days, way back, about in the [18]40s and '50s. Nobody knows what E Clampus Vitus means. I guess it was defunct for about forty years, but along about in the '20s, it was dug up and reorganized. Dane Coolidge was writing about the mines, and he was one that dug it up again. I think it's headquartered in Stockton. Professor Wood was writing on it. He's the fellow that developed that museum of mining at Murphy's. You ought to go up there. You'd get lots about mining up there. You take Murphy's and Sutter's Fort and Nevada City and Grass Valley, I think they've all got exhibits on mining. And possibly Sonora. They're all still maintaining lots of interest in the old days.

E Clampus Vitus gets out a little slick magazine of four to six pages every two or three months. It doesn't make much sense, and yet there's some history running through it, and if you once join it, you just can't make yourself quit.

They've got quite a big chapter here, and there's a chapter up in Bishop where I was born, called the Slim Princess Chapter. That's what they called the railroad up there, the Slim Princess. But I think the main office is still in Stockton.

My grandfather belonged to it. I remember he used to tell stories about it. Among other things, he'd tell stories of

Albright: incidents, things that happened to miners. I remember one story that's typical of what they did. The Palace Hotel was built, it was a Sharon proposition, and all the mining people that went to San Francisco stayed at the Palace Hotel. It was something different in the whole West, the Palace Hotel was. It had the appointments of the East that nobody out here knew anything about, you know.

Well, on this occasion, a miner got enough money to go to San Francisco, and he went to the Palace Hotel, of course. And he went down to the dining room for dinner. He was given a table for one because he was alone, and the waiter came along and said, "Soup, sir?" "No, I don't want any soup," he said. And another waiter came along and said, "Soup, sir?" Well, half a dozen waiters came and asked him if he wanted soup, and he didn't want it. Finally he managed to stop a waiter and get his order in, and he had his dinner.

Well, he went upstairs after dinner, and his room was awfully hot. He hadn't had any experience with heat. He didn't know where the heat was coming from, and he didn't know how to shut it off if he had. So he took his clothes off and pitched himself on the bed. Well, there was a sick man in the room next to him, which he didn't know about, of course, and the nurse came up to give him an enema. And she got into the wrong room and found him lying on the bed and she gave him an enema. The miner said, "I knew they'd get the damned soup into me one way or the other."

[laughter] That's typical of the stories that were handed down. And they're still doing it, still digging up those old things. That's E Clampus Vitus. I'll see if I can send you a copy.

The retired president of U.S. Borax is living in Woodside. He's active with the Bancroft, I think, Jim Gerstley. I think his children went to Stanford. But I keep telling Willa [Baum], everybody I know is dead. When you get to be ninety-six all my friends are dead.

L. Swent: It works the other way around too. It reminds me of the minister at church who was telling the congregation that they should forgive their enemies and turn the other cheek, that you should really not have any enemies. Finally he said, "Now, tell me, is there anyone in the congregation who has no enemies? Please hold up your hand."

This old fellow held up his hand, and the minister said, "You have no enemies?" and this fellow said, "No." The minister said, "Wonderful! You tell the congregation how you've lived in order to accomplish that." And this fellow said, "The bastards are all dead." [laughter] So that's the position you're in.

Albright: My enemies are all dead, and as my daughter pointed out, you can call them anything you want to, it doesn't make any difference. You can say anything you want about them. It's that way with me.

The University of California at Berkeley, 1908-1913

Albright: I was at Berkeley from 1908 to 1913, and in those days, the mining department was quite an important one. They were turning them out, mining engineers. Quite a number of my class were, but what became of them I don't know. I don't remember that they actually practiced mining.

I studied mining law, just mining cases which I did a little bit. I only did the one year. But one of the inducements to get me to go to Washington was that they made mining law there, and land law and water law. It was a good place to be; that's how I came to go to Washington. I didn't know anything about parks; I'd never been in one. The job was to create a bureau. First thing I knew, I was in it pretty deep, and one thing and another came along, so it was too late to practice.

My class of 1912 was a great class. Earl Warren was in our class, you know. Five of us have been made alumni of the year. One of the officers of the alumni association recently said that he thought the class of 1912 was the most interesting class they'd ever had. Many of the people attained distinction of one kind or other.

Three of us, including myself, have been head of the Park Service. Newton Drury was head of the Save the Redwoods League. Of course Earl Warren was our greatest one. We had a congressman from Stockton for a long time, named Johnson. Herman Phleger, a very prominent man, was one of the lawyers that prosecuted the Nazi criminals at Nuremberg. He was also at the United Nations. But they're practically all gone; just one or two left now. The Phleger boys were from Stockton; both of them were football players.

We even had distinction in athletics. Stanford had been beating California, or tying them, in football, for six or seven years. In 1908, Stanford won again, but they never won anything while the 1912 people were there. For three years, California won, and also the graduate year, and if it hadn't been for the freshman eligibility rule, we'd have won the first year. It was the same way with other athletics; they seemed to be taking everything. But they're all gone now, all gone.

Transcriber: Eleanor Swent
Final typist: Sophia Hayes

Seated: Horace Marden Albright, recipient of the U.S. Medal of Freedom. *Standing:* Mary Gower Albright (widow of Albright's son), Roswell Schenck, and Marion Albright Schenck (daughter). 8 December 1980.

U.S. Department of Interior
photograph by Richard Frear

Excerpts from
"The Reminiscences of Horace Albright,"
Volumes 2 and 3, 1962,
in the Collection of Columbia University

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you're less likely to get yourself involved in a war, and I suppose in 1933 it was not anticipated that the war, if it came, would be one that you would want to get involved in.

Albright: Yes, but then what's the use of training these more than 200,000 boys that were being made to drill in these universities? What were you training them for? It's the same thing. What are you training all these National Guard troops for, all around over the country? They're all civilians. They were ~~college students and~~ men who were willing to put a little time in on military. It's the same thing. But nossir, you couldn't make him believe that.

Q: Will you tell me about breaking off with the government? Why had you decided to do that?

Albright: Well, in the first place, as I told you, I was educated as a mining lawyer, and you get mining in your blood. My grandfather and father were mining men. Naturally, if you've got mining in your blood or anything else in your blood, you tend to lean towards a certain kind of activity. I always had a strong interest in mining. Wherever I went, I liked to see mines, go into mines, look at the mines. So I was thoroughly in touch with minging.

Then, Mr. Mather was a borax manufacturer. He had a borax mine, which I had been in. I also knew about these other borax companies, including the outfit 20 Mule Team, which we're in now. I knew about their activities. I came from a mining country. So I always thought if I ever did go into business, it would probably be something connected with mining. ~~Long before I had given up any idea of practicing law, which was my specialty, mining law, but~~ I had always kept up a little on the law ~~too~~. I had read decisions relating to mining and water law.

I also had in mind the fact that some day or other, I could be dumped out of that position. I'd gotten to the top. I couldn't get any higher. The higher positions were all political. I had a wife and two children, and no accumulation of capital, because I never had anything, and the years that I was in the government service I had ~~n't~~ saved hardly anything. Couldn't. It's hard enough to save in the government service if you haven't got any responsibilities outside the office or obligations, but as Superintendent of Yellowstone I had an obligation to do an awful lot of entertaining. The same way when I was Director of the Park Service -- entertaining for which I had no expense account. I was drained down almost to my last dollar all the time, and carrying my office. So I felt that someday or other, I'd have to educate my children, and I'd better be careful and see that I got in a position to do so. So I had that in mind, to guide me.

I hadn't sought any job. I was pleased and happy and proud in what I was done. I knew that I was doing work that was important, and I certainly had no excuse to make for it and no regrets. But if a job came along, I always felt that I had reached that point -- particularly if I could do those two or three things that I told you about, if I could round out the Park System, the parks and monuments, and if I could get into the historical preservation field; if I could build an organization that would carry on; if I could do something in the way of professionalizing the organization -- all of which I thought I had done.

So there was a certain defeat coming on, which I was positive was going to happen in 1932. I was confident ~~that~~ for at least two years before it happened that the next administration would be Democratic; unless there could have been a complete reversal of the Depression and could have a booming economy, why, we were going to have a change, and I might get caught in that. So when I was approached, by people that knew something about me ~~and had some knowledge~~ -- in the case of one man, I'd known him all my life, ~~this borax potash set-up~~ -- when they approached me and asked me whether I'd be available, I said, "What's your proposition?"

Q: Who was this man?

Albright: His name was Christian Brevoort. He's long since dead. He was the head in the United States of the Pacific Coast Borax Company in those days. Mr. Mather had died. He died before I had any thoughts about change. As a matter of fact, as I think I told you, Mr. Mather hoped to keep me in the government service by giving me some stock in his company, and leaving me a bequest of $25,000, which he'd also left to my assistant, Mr. Cammerer. He gave both of us some stock in his company about 1926, and in his will $25,000 cash or in securities. But the stock wasn't any good. His company's mines had run out of ore, and there was competition that laid it low. It was not paying dividends, and it had no future. It was about to liquidate, as the stock was no good. The money was, of course. But the interest on $25,000 didn't put us very much further ahead. After inheritance taxes in Illinois and for the federal government the amount was $22,500.

So I talked with these Potash people, who had discovered and were developing the new potash mine near Carlsbad, New Mexico, and I just couldn't see how I could leave the Park Service. This was in 1930. They first approached me in 1930. I'd only been in office about two years. It was towards the end of 1930, in the fall, when they spoke to me. I just felt that I had a responsibility down there in Washington, that I hadn't been director very long. I had things to do, I had all of this re-organization

to do, and securing of the historical parks. I hadn't hardly started on that. I just thought I would be leaving without having accomplished anything. I thought I had a lot of things to do, so I turned the offer down. I said, "I can't consider it, if you want me now. If it's something in the future, that's something else again." They wanted me right at that time.

Well, six months went by, and they sent for me again. I came to New York and they talked to me in more glowing terms, made me a better offer. But by that time I was engaged in working out the sesquicentennial of Yorktown, the celebration of the Battle of Yorktown. We had been given that responsibility. We had also gotten through legislation to acquire Yorktown and Jamestown, and we were getting into this historic field, which interested me tremendously. So I again promptly turned it down.

That fall, that summer of 1931, I went to Alaska and was stricken with appendicitis up there, and a lot of my summer was lost on account of being sick up there the latter part of the summer. When I got back in the fall I was asked if a man could see me in San Francisco. One of these men went out and met me in San Francisco and again talked to me about this matter. I said, "Now, we might have a changeover a year from now, and my conscience won't let me fool around with this big thing, with a change coming on. I'm sure there's going to be a change. Politics could take the park service, it could get all mixed up,

and I can't consider it now." I turned the offer down a third time. I said, "Go ahead, get somebody else. Forget me. Drop me out of this whole thing." I said, "I know it would be interesting. I know it would be in my line. I'm sure I could do the job. But I just can't give up what I'm doing. I'm in too deep. You've just got to forget me."

Well, I didn't hear anything more about it for nearly a year. It was about 30 days after -- no, very soon after -- the election in 1932. I came up here to New York, to the wedding of John D. Rockefeller III -- I'd known him since he was a boy, and we were invited to his wedding up here in Riverside Church. I wrote to the borax and potash people and said I'd like to stop and see them, as I was going to be in New York. I would bring my children along for their first view of New York. We were going to be here for several days. If they wanted to see me, I said I'd like to see them, but "I'm not looking for any job because more than ever I've got to stick with this Park Service."

But they were still looking for me, and they made me another offer at that time, and I said I'd take it under advisement. I said, "I'll give you my word some time in January, I can't do it now; but just let me see what's happening around Washington. Let us see what's going to happen. Let me get the drift of it."

So in January I told them that I thought they could count on me. I said, "I don't know when I can go. It might be three months, it might be six months, it might be a year. If you want

to take me with those hazards and that uncertainty, if you want to stake out the job for me, all right. I'll come when I can."

I fixed no date. Of course, the administration changed in March, and you know what happened-- I went in under Secretary Ickes and I got into all those things that had to be done. I got the reorganization through, and I turned up lots of other things that needed my attention. The CCC came along. I had to see it get under way, and I had to see to this public works program, so far as it related to the national parks, because we got a lot of money for public works, for roads, trails, buildings.

It was along in June before I felt that I could quit, or give notice that I was going to quit. Then finally I told the Secretary what I was going to do, and I worked out a date with him, in August. It was August before I finally left.

I was not a professional park planner or executive. I was a lawyer. I was a government agency executive. I was not a professional park man. The Park Service was getting to the point where it was building professional men. I also had the idea -- which I had always had -- to give young men a chance, give other men a chance. I did not believe in hanging on to everything yourself until the end. If one can give another man a chance, after you've had yours, why, that's the way to live. So I was glad to see another man come in and get opportunities.

I knew, also, that if I did come up here, I would be not very far away, I could keep in touch with what was going on, and there would be ways that I could help, and that's the way it's developed.

Q: You told me that your Directors have encouraged you in conservation activities. Did you know they were going to before you came?

Albright: Oh, yes. They made that promise to me from the beginning. They said they knew that I was in conservation work awfully deep, and I was one of the men most involved in this sort of thing, and it was inevitable that I would want to keep this up, and they would expect me to and would be happy to let me do it. They said if necessary I could take time off that I felt I should, and also have extra help I might need in the office. I didn't have any extra help for about ten years, but beginning about 1923, the volume of business and outside business both increased so that I had to have an extra secretary; for the last more than ten years that I was there I had two secretaries.

Q: What was the job specifically that you were asked to take, the general manager?

Albright: I was vice-president and general manager. The president was a man nearly 90 years old, so I was really president of the company. The president was Mr. McSweeney. He was really chairman of the board of directors, Mr. Henry McSweeney -- a very fine man. He lived out at Atlantic City; he didn't have here. He never drew any pay, and never put an expense account in. He'd come

up whenever we had any business to discuss with him, or to attend a board meeting, but I was the actual de facto head of the company. I made all the decisions that didn't come before the board of directors, and I had full administrative charge. Mr. McSweeney never gave me any instructions at any time, in all the years I was with him. Of course, I sought and welcomed his advice.

Q: I see. Who had been the executive head of the company before you came?

Albright: There hadn't been any. It was a new company.

Q: The company had actually been started back in '26 or so, hadn't it, in New Mexico?

Albright: Mr. McSweeney had been head of it all the time; activity had been mainly a job of building this mine. There were engineers and chemists at work on the mine, building the refining plant and so forth, but that was all being done in New Mexico. They'd never gotten to the point where we had to have a selling organization, or where we had to have a personnel department, or had to have records and files and all that sort of thing that goes along with the running of a company. Of course, Mr. Paul Speer, the general counsel, was at work on obtaining prospecting permits and leases, and perfecting the corporate organization. And Mr. Dingley was getting the New York office organized.

Q: In a sense, you came in because of your interest in mining, but what you came into wasn't mining -- it was sales, personnel, that sort of thing.

Albright: Yes, it was administration. Of course, everybody reported to me. These people in Carlsbad reported to me. Of course, I had to supervise budgets, make decisions, we had public relations, we had legislation, both in New Mexico and in Washington, that had to be looked after. All those things came in when we got under way. ~~When~~ The mine was actually opened, in January 1931, and the refinery was completed in September, 1932. It was a very small refinery. We weren't producing very much. ~~Of course,~~ We had relationships with railroads, we had freight rates to look after, we had all kinds of connections that you had to pick up, once you had an established company.

We had a man here in charge ~~that, according to Mr. McSweeney, was~~ an old time borax man, by the name of Dingley, Walter F. Dingley, who was ~~secretary~~-treasurer of the company. That was his title. But he was a very competent executive, and he handled things until I got here very well and was a tremendous help to me for all the years that I was here. He didn't retire for a year after I did. He still lives here in town.

Q: How about Paul Speer?

Albright: Well, Paul Speer was the attorney. He was the general counsel, but he was in a firm downtown. Paul Speer is an admiralty lawyer. We still have lots of fun about him as an admiralty lawyer passing on problems down in New Mexico, where nothing bigger than a rowboat ever sails. His father had been a partner of Mr. McSweeney's many years earlier. His father became general counsel for Socony-Vacuum. His father was, and he himself is, a very fine lawyer, graduated Harvard 1913 and Harvard Law School 1917, an outstanding lawyer. But he wasn't up here with me until 1948, I would say. He finally gave up the general law practice and devoted himself to the company entirely. He still is here as a consultant, having retired over two years ago. I might add that Mr. Speer, Sr., Paul's father, was a member of Congress from Pennsylvania 1910-12.

Q: Where did Zabriskie fit in?

Albright: Chris Zabriskie was the American head of the Pacific Coast Borax Company. Now, the Snowden-McSweeney Company found the potash ore in New Mexico while drilling for oil. They're oil people -- they <u>were</u> oil people -- they'd made a big success as independent oil drillers. But while they were drilling for oil, outside of Carlsbad, New Mexico, they found potash. It was the first discovery of a commercial body of potash in the Western hemisphere, and it was big news at the time. But they were oil producers,not miners nor refiners. They produced oil and sold

it to the pipeline companies, you see. They didn't even make gasoline. They were just oil explorers and oil producers. So that when they found a mine, they had nobody to operate a mine. They began to try to find some mining company that would go in with them and open the mine and develop the potash industry. So they got in touch with American Smelting and Refining Company, the Phelps-Dodge Company, the Kennecott Copper Company, and Anaconda, and other big companies like that, to see if they wouldn't come in and take hold. But the mining companies didn't like it. They thought there was too much potash abroad, in Spain and France and Germany, particularly France and Germany, so that they couldn't compete -- that the Europeans shipped the stuff over here so cheaply, to these eastern ports, with no tariff on it, and that the railroad freight rates were high, and there was no source of good labor down there in that desert country. To them the New Mexico field was a forbidding country. So they wouldn't take any interest in potash.

But the Pacific Coast Borax Company, which was owned in England, had been mining borax in just such country as that for years. They'd been in Death Valley, and then later on they'd come on down near Barstow, in California, on the Santa Fe Railroad, and found a fine borax deposit there. They heard about the potash discovery and they sent their engineer, Mr. Clarence M. Rasor, over there to look over the situation. And he came back with the recommendation that they might well buy into the

potash enterprise and do something about it.

So then began negotiations, led by Mr. Zabriskie, who, as I have said, was head of the Pacific Coast Borax Company in this country. Incidentally, he'd known me all my life. He and my father had been partners in an undertaker business in Nevada way back in the early days, before he was with the borax people. This was a little side business they had. My father was an engineer, and Zabriskie was a telegraph operator and express agent.

Q: They ran a funeral parlor?

Albright: They ran a funeral parlor in Candelaria, Nevada, working evening and Sundays when necessary. Mr. Rasor recommended that the Pacific Coast Borax Company buy an interest in this potash mine. So they negotiated, and finally the Snowden-McSweeney people said, "Why don't you buy half of it?" So they bought a 50% interest, and furthermore, they undertook, as buyers -- they were miners and refiners, they knew how to build a mine and refinery -- they undertook to raise the finances and to build the mine and refinery -- or to complete the mine. It had been started, but there was a job to complete it. So that's how the Borax Company got into the potash business. That's how Zabriskie got to be a part of management. He worked along with Dingley in running things until they got an executive, you see.

Although Whether Zabriskie was the man who first suggested me, or whether it was some one of the others, because I knew people on both sides of the company thing, I don't know. I don't know exactly/whoever did suggest my name first, as a possibilyty. I don't know how many other people they talked to before they came around to me, or after they came around to me, as an executive for the company.

Q: The other question that comes to mind about your coming here-- you were leaving government because you felt you needed something a little more substantial, to be a little more secure. Why did you come to a company which was in this incipient kind of stage, where important big companies, like Phelps Dodge etc., had felt that it probably wasn't a good risk in competition with European products? Why did you feel that this was any better than the government?

Albright: Well, that's a good question. The position offered It wasn't any more secure than the government, in a way. It paid more money, but it could have been bad for me. That's why I demanded a five year contract. They gave me a five year contract, which meant that somebody would have to take care of me for five years if this thing blew up. But I think that one of the things that guided me more than anything else was the challenge -- the challenge of tackling a new thing, building a new industry.

In Washington and Yellowstone Park

Here I'd already helped build a new bureau. Now here was a chance to ~~help~~ build a new industry. It had Western connections which were in my line. ~~It was~~ -- Mining was something I'd always been interested in. ~~It~~ To talk mining was something new and different, and it was a kind of a challenge, and I felt that it was worth the gamble. I felt if worst came to worst and I had to get back to the government, I probably could get back, but I knew I'd never want to do it -- because once having cut loose, I'd want to keep on going.

~~But~~ There was a hazard in there. There was a danger. But it was a tremendous challenge.

G: Those days, once you come out of the government, from a position such as bureau chief, I think you can probably get a pretty good job. If you come out as a general, you can obviously get an excellent job! But what about in 1933?

Albright: Well, the rank of a bureau chief is about the same as a general. It paid about the same, and that's just about where he ranked. Well, he's a little higher rank than a general, as a matter of fact. The bureau chief is a third rank, in the third layer of officials in Washington. The Cabinet is the top; the little Cabinet, the Assistant Secretaries, come next; and the bureau chiefs come next. That's the way they rank. Now,

generals are about one grade lower than that, because they're part of a bureau. Their pay isn't far different, but unless they are temporarily acting as bureau chiefs in the Defense Department they are not quite in the rank of bureau chief.

Q: What was the attitude of business at that time? Would it have been eager to employ a man who had held this position? I mean, if U.S. Potash hadn't panned out, would you have had to go back to government, or could you have turned around to industry somewhere and said, "See here, I've had this administrative experience...."

Albright: Well, I don't know. That would be just guessing, as to what might have happened. You must remember the depression was still on, and very bad.

Q: You were moving against the crowd; everybody was going <u>into</u> the government.

Albright: That's the reason I insisted on a five year contract. Now, they would have had to put me someplace for five years -- either the oil people would have had to take care of me, or the borax people would have had to take care of me, or both of them. They would have had to put me in some position, someplace. There wasn't anything going to happen to borax or oil. If anything

happened, it would happen to potash, because it was new and they were competing with these tremendous forces abroad. But nothing was going to happen to these other two enterprises. They were all set, and they would have had to take care of me for five years. So I had the feeling: well, if the thing blows up or if I blow up, they've got to take care of me for five years anyway. Mrs. Albright and I were trying to be economical. We were certainly not spendthrifts. We knew how to manage money, and we could have saved quite a little bit in five years if we'd had to. We started out on this basis, and we did. But by 1936, when the company filed its first registration statement in Washington for a preferred stock issue, we had to put in that prospectus and that registration statement the complete wording of all contracts of that kind I had. And I didn't want a contract of mine published. I didn't want people to know what I was getting, or that I had protected myself. I didn't want that contract to be around. There wasn't anything wrong with it, but I was just a little sensitive about having it widely circulated in financial or other circles. So I turned it in to the Board of Directors and told them to cancel it.

Which was another daredevil thing to do, in a way.

Q: But was the company doing well?

Albright: Oh, yes. We were on our way then, but we'd just gone

through a price war that was pretty bad. We'd lost money in 1934 and just barely got by in 1935, in the fight with the foreigners. We made a very small profit. We had never paid a dividend, and we were still in the building stage, you see. But I was so deep in it by that time and so deeply interested and so determined that this thing was going to go, that I just pitched the contract.

Horace M. Albright - 14 October 1960 - by William Ingersoll.

Q: The NRA was under way when you came to this company, wasn't it?

Mr. Albright: Yes, it was. The law had been passed just before I came up here, as I recall it. It was stirring up Washington considerably, and of course almost all the business world was pretty well stirred up, because it involved some rather new principles, for that day and age. Ever since the passage of the Anti-Trust Law, the last thing in the world a sensible businessman would do would be to try to talk very much business with his competitor, particularly along lines that made it -- certain practices, such as territory or exports, or I suppose even labor relations they probably wouldn't talk about any more than they had to. So this provided -- this bill, this new law provided for having opportunities accorded reported to businessmen to work out codes of fair practice.

Of course one of the main features of it was Section 7, under which they agreed to pay certain minimum wages, and also other features relating to labor management. There were all kinds of provisions in the NRA act. It was a very big bill, and some parts of it never were put into effect, I do not think. For instance, the one about an industry engaged in certain operations, theoretically

under the law, at least, anyway the law said it could be done, was to make a showing that you were being injured by imports, and the President had a right ~~then~~ on the submission of proof to restrict imports. I don't think that provision was ever put into effect, although General Hugh S. Johnson, the administrator of the NRA, asked the chemical industry to make a test case and he'd see what he could do with it. I happened to be one of the committee that tried to make a test case, for chemicals, as being injured by imports.

C: Did you pick potash, or another chemical?

Albright: No, we picked another chemical, saltcake, ~~It's a salt product.~~ sodium sulphate. ~~(> Soviet product? check)~~

The excitement, of course, grew out of the fact that the NRA administration wanted all business to think about codes and get together with government representatives sitting in to work out codes. Now, some of these codes that were suggested were more extensive than others. In the case of potash, we were never able to get together on a code governing anything other than labor relations. Of course, in some cases, very broad segments of all industries worked out a code, ~~and you'd have a lot of details~~, in which a lot of different phases of business would be covered. Then in some cases, these would be only the one item, for instance, the matter of labor and ~~the matter of~~ wages.

The Wages and Hours Law hadn't been passed, up to that time, so it wasn't so much a question of hours as it was of wages. The minimum wage was 25¢ an hour, which sounds ridiculous in view of the demand now for $1.25 minimum wage per hour. Of course, there are not very manywage scales that have even as low as $1.25, in this day and age, particularly in the larger industries. But in those days, ~~it was 25¢.~~ in some parts of the country, wages were lower than 25¢ per hour.

Our company was in this position. We had just begun operations. Our mine was opened in January, 1931, and our refinery in September, 1932, and we were down there in southeastern New Mexico where part of the labor force was from Mexico. Some of them were Mexicans born in New Mexico but of Mexican origin. Well, the going wage for them, particularly on the farms and the ranches, where most of them worked, was 15¢ an hour. Our company, so far as I can recall, never paid the minimum wage of 15¢ an hour. We paid, I think, about 20¢ an hour. We wanted to be over the minimum and yet on the other hand we had to respect the local feeling that we must not disturb the economy too much in those days. The potash industry was being built It was in the midst of the Depression, of course, the depth of the Depression, as a matter of fact.

Q: I suppose if you had raised the wages that you were paying to the legal minimum of 25¢, it would have had the effect of throwing Mexicans out of work, inasmuch as other people if they

had to raise to 25¢ would fire people?

Albright: There was no compulsion for other people to raise the pay. The point about it is, everybody would want to work for the company that paid 25¢ an hour, and we would be causing disturbances. There would be jealousies among these low-paid people themselves, and there would be of course a feeling among others who were paying less and felt that was all they could pay, that eventually we were leading ~~into~~ them to higher wages.

But the interesting thing was that our first competitor came into the field about that time, and ~~they~~ its officers apparently were working on very short amount of capital, and when we began talking about a code, or with or without a code being in interstate commerce, we would be expected to meet that minimum wage -- we promptly said we'd be glad to do it. But our competitor was horrified and insisted that we were wrecking everything by making such a drastic move, and appealed to us not to do it, but to stay with the wage that was prevalent in the community.

Well, it ended up by our having hearings in Washington, and the NRA administrator issued an order compromising the matter at 20¢ an hour. So that was the wage that we paid during NRA to the common laborers, ~~labor that~~ who had no skills.

It was very interesting, though, because when I first went down there, it was evident that these people of Mexican origin

not only lived very simply and very poorly, I thought, but there seemed to be a feeling on the part of the local people that you couldn't do anything with them. Many of them lived outside of town on small tracts of poor land. Many were "squatters." Those of them who did live in town lived in a very poor section. They didn't keep their properties up in any sense of the word. Many of them had dirt floors. Of course, it's a warm climate down there much of the year, but it can get cold in winter.

I remember coming one night to a community of employees of ours who lived not on our property but in the neighborhood of our refinery, and asked to go through a house. One of the wives of one of our employees there cheerfully let me see her place. I said, "Well, can't I go through the whole house?"

She said, "There are four families living in this house. It's divided into four places." It was a very large building, probably an old barn or something at one time,and the places were clean, but they had no floors, no wooden floors.

I said to our manager right away, "Winter's coming on, we can't let our people live in a place like this. One thing we can do immediately is to put wooden floors in these houses."

He said, "You'd better be careful. They've got a reputation of burning up the floors rather than go out and dig for wood."

When they talk about digging for wood they mean for the roots of the mesquite tree which is prevalent in that region. It's quite profuse, and the roots are dry; the natives down there

used these mesquite roots for fires. That's been done from time immemorial, I suppose, digging for wood. I think also they had a saying that you "climb for water" because in some of the cacti there was water held after rains in those arms of the cacti, or possibly they extracted some water from the pulp itself. They climbed for water and dug for wood. I am sure the climbing for water was in Arizona where the tall saguaro grows.

Well, the labor clause was just a part of the NRA. I would have to refer back to the files to see just what the extent of our participation in the NRA was. In the first place, when I came here, I knew General Hugh S. Johnson, who was the administrator. He was very closely associated with Bernard Baruch, but before that, in the First World War, he'd been an army officer. I think he was a West Pointer. He'd been in the cavalry, and at one time he was acting superintendent of Sequoia National Park. Later on, he'd gone to the University of California. It seems that the army had permitted some of its officers to go to college and get higher degrees and gain professional standing, in order to be able better to do their army work, and Hugh Johnson went to the University of California School of Jurisprudence to which I had gone, and received a JD degree, Jurist Dr. degree, I think in 1915 or 1916.

Q: He'd been at Sequoia before the National Park Service came along?

Albright: Yes, before the National Park Service. He was one of the last of the military superintendents of Sequoia Park.

When, of course, he'd gone through the war. He got clear up to the title of brigadier general during the war, one of these temporary brigadier generals, like quite a number of other people, I guess, in both wars. When Hugh Johnson got to be a brigadier general, before he could be put back to where he normally would be -- I think he would have gone back to about a major, if he'd stayed in the army -- he resigned, which left him a general the rest of his life. Quite a number of men did that. We had a fellow as superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park named Crosby who was in the army for two or three months during the First World War as an engineer colonel, andhe just loved that title better than anything in the world, though he was just in there temporarily and then out. On the other hand, I had friends that got clear up to colonel and general, and stayed in the army and had to go back to captain or major. That didn't happen so much in the Second World War, because the Korean War came along, and they kept troops involved anyway in the occupation and so forth, so they didn't lose officers back so far. Perhaps some of them got moved back a little, but most of them didn't. But after the First War there was wholesale moving back in rank, and of course a great many of them got out of the army.

At any rate, Hugh Johnson and I had some things in common.

This interest in the parks, this University of California degree, and a general interest in the West. So I saw quite a little of him, just as I was coming up here, got well acquainted with him -- rather, renewed the acquaintance we had.

K: This was when he came to Washington?

Albright: Yes, when he ~~was going~~ came to Washington as head of the NRA. But on the other hand, I didn't let that influence me in what I did about codes. We were soon offered the opportunity to have a code of fair practices in the potash industry. But the potash industry was a very frail thing at that time. There were only three of us in the business in the United States, really only two, ourselves and American Potash and Chemical Corporation in California, and this new one that was coming in in New Mexico, the Potash Company of America. The bulk of the potash that was being used in this country was coming from Germany and France, as it had been for years. ~~Up~~ Until the First World War, the Germans had a monopoly on potash in this country, and then when the First World War came on, France regained Alsace, the province of Alsace, where there had been a discovery of potash and where some mines had been built. So that Treaty of Versailles put France in the potash business. Then the French and the Germans worked up a cartel, and they had agents in various parts of the world selling potash -- a joint agency. That is, there was

in each country a company, ~~an exporting -- I mean~~ an importing company, and ~~there was~~ each company had a French executive and a German executive. Also they had --being probably suspicious of each other -- they had staff members of both French and German allegiance. They might be Americans, but they'd be employed by the French side or the German side. We had that kind of a set-up here. The company was known as N.V.Potash Export Maatschappij -- that's the Dutch name -- it was a Dutch company, because it was actually incorporated in Holland. It was owned by the French and German potash interests, and later they took in the Spanish and Russian potash producers. By the time the Second war broke out, all those countries were in the cartel.

So we were faced with having to consider them, in any code that was worked out, because they were the principal suppliers of potash. That handicapped us in trying to do anything. We didn't know that we had the right to tie up with foreign interests, and we didn't know that we wanted to.

H: In other words, you felt that in order to do anything, they would have had to come in with you on the code?

Albright: Well, to make it effective. We knew perfectly well that they wouldn't agree to put into effect in their country any wage ~~scale~~ rates we might agree to under the code. So we

finally had to come to the conclusion that we'd have to ~~do our~~ deal with NRA without them, if we had a code.

Q: What about pricing, couldn't they have come in with you at that level?

Albright: Well, I suppose they could, but that was a very ticklish thing, the pricing, and the business men didn't like that pricing end of the NRA. It was dangerous. You still had your anti-trust laws, they probably weren't completely suspended. A lot of these questions were never resolved before the so-called Schechter Case in which the Supreme Court killed the NRA, about 1936. It was in effect a couple of years.

So ~~we drew codes and went to Washington, and~~ we three potash producers drew codes and went to Washington and discussed them with the proper officials down there. We discussed the wage question. We tried to work out something, but we just could never come to an agreement. Our lawyers were afraid of the whole set-up, and we ourselves were afraid of it. So we never did agree on a code.

Q: Who drew up the code? Was there already an association, or was it simply the three of you?

Albright: We formed our association, which we could do under the NRA. We formed a little associations, and drew up certain articles, and submitted them to the NRA for approval. Then we could meet and talk about what kind of a code we'd have, but as I say, we never could agree on it.

I remember one funny thing happened. We were called to meet in Washington one morning by an NRA official, and we were to be there at a certain hour, and we were all there. And lo and behold, here was a Frenchman here, the head of the French side of this German-French company. His name was Rene Gide. A very interesting man, and when/the government official ~~who~~ checked up on who we were -- we were sitting around the table, a couple from each company, usually an executive like myself, and an attorney -- he came to Mr. Gide, who was from the foreign company, and the government officer was very much surprised ~~when~~ and wanted to know what he was doing there.

He said, "Well, you see, we in France are connoisseurs, so to speak, in cooking, and we sometimes like to go into the kitchen. That's the way it is here. I think this is a kind of a kitchen, and one likes to be in the kitchen when things are being cooked, so I thought I would come."

Everybody laughed and this official laughed, and he said, "Well, I guess we aren't going to say anything here today that you shouldn't hear, so you can stay."

The Frenchman stayed.

At any rate, we couldn't get together on a code.

Q: Incidentally, could the foreign outfit have forced their way in in any way, if they had taken it into their heads to?

Albright: Nobody could force their way into these codes. Codes It had to be a voluntary association.

Lots of companies went down there thinking that this might be an easier way of doing business, that you could get more stability in your business, you'd have perhaps a little better price. Of course, it was the depth of the Depression, and they were willing to do more if they could afford it for their employees. In other words, they thought that business conditions could be greatly improved, and that was what President Roosevelt thought, too, and General Johnson and the other people who were working on this: they thought that on the whole it would be a stabilizing thing for business and for employees and for people generally.

But on the other hand, there were a great many people who thought: well, this is going to involve telling my competitors too much about my business. I can do better by myself. This will restrict my activities, my growth and my future. And they didn't want to have anything to do with the NRA; some companies

didn't have anything to do with it.

One of the fine companies (foreign?) that refused to sit down and talk with anyone about anything bgt labor was American Cyanamid with offices in this building right next to us. Mr. William B. Bell was president of this American Cyanamid Company, a very able lawyer -- incidentally, he was a classmate of Goldthwaite Dorr, (whom) that we were just talking about, at Columbia. He built the American Cyanamid Co. -- I guess he should be credited with that. He finally suggested that we people in the chemical business get together on a code covering just labr -- just labor and nothing else; that we comply fully with the NRA code governing labor and see that everybody who joined the code did. We'd have to employ a code administrator, and Mr. Bell arranged to have (code) his offices over there in the Cyanamid (company's quarters) building. They got a man by the name of (Alan) Clark, who still lives up here in Rye, I think, or Greenwich, as the code administrator, and he was a good one. And that's what we joined, our company and the other potash companies: we joined the Chemical Code. That was one of the most effective codes, but it only related to labor relations and to wages.

Q: What was the reason for that? You just couldn't agree on other things than labor? Or -- why were you able to reach agreements on labor?

Albright: We all agreed that labor should have more, and that there should be more stable labor relations; and in the chemical business ~~it~~ They were pretty stable anyway. It was a good idea to maintain ~~it~~ stability, and we were in a position, most of us, to advance wages somewhat. ~~So~~ We knew that was something that was worthwhile if we could do it. Also, it put us technically within the camp of NRA people. We weren't outside where we could be shot at as obstructionists and non-conformists and so forth.

S: It meant you could put the Blue Eagle up.

Albright: Yes, we put the Blue Eagle up -- sure, that's exactly right. We had the Blue Eagle on our letterheads. We were able to use the Blue Eagle.

But I will say this -- that while it looked at first as if it had some great possibilities, the longer the campaign to draft codes went on, at least in the chemical industry, the ~~more its~~ possibilities got dimmer and dimmer. We finally decided that if we were going to go ahead, we'd best do it alone, play ~~our own hand for,~~ play a lone hand.

S: The reaction to NRA could have come from several areas. You could have been just politically unsympathetic to this kind of "collectivism," you could have found that it was all very

fine on paper but when you sat down to work it out it was impossibly complicated. You could have found many things. What basically was the reason for changing your point of view about it? First you were sympathetic or --

Albright: I think basically we felt that it would be restrictive, that it would restrict our own growth. I'm talking about our own company. We were young, we were very young, we had a very small refinery, we wanted to grow. We didn't want to be restricted. We didn't want to have any obstacles put in our way. I imagine other compnies felt the same way.

Q: These companies were all small companies and new companies, weren't you?

Albright: Wall, American Potash and Chemical wasn't so new. It had been going on for some years. There were two of us that were new. One of them had hardly started; it was just getting started. We'd only been operating a year, so far as our refinery was concerned. I think that, as I remember it, was our main reason for not wanting to be mixed up in the NRA any further than just the labor side of it. We were sympathetic to the labor side. We felt all along that labor in the mining and

chemical business could be stabilized at fair rates. You know, in the mining business in the old days, and I think clear up until 1934-35, it was customary for the men to work 56 hours. An 8 hour day, 7 days in the week. Now, you could have days off when you asked for it, but the pay was so much a day for 7 days a week. Now, when they asked me to come in this company as vice-president, general manager and chief executive officer, I warned them that I might be difficult from the standpoint of wages and hours, because I felt that it was wrong for any industry to be on a 56 hour or 7 day week, inasmuch as my parents and grandparents had been in the mining business and I knew quite a little bit about it, I felt that the mining business was one that was backward in the matter of hours, that there ought to be time off for every man in the course of the week, and I didn't want to see a 56 hour week in any company that I was connected with. But I was perfectly willing to look at the situation and see where it led us.

Well, I was able, because of the way the company went ahead, to work out a plan for bringing our people down to 48 hours a week without any reduction in pay. We were the first company, so far as I know, certainly in that section of New Mexico if not in the West, in the mining business, to put in a 48 hour week. In our case, we felt able to do it without reducing pay, so that ~~their~~ take-home pay of our employees was ~~the same.~~ not reduced by the reduction in hours.

Q: What did you do, knock off one day, or spread it out?

Albright: We left off a day for every employee, but of course we didn't shut down, because with the kind of a mine we were operating, in the potash industry, and also the borax industry, which our company was in -- both of them -- we operated right round the clock. We operated 24 hours a day, 7 days in the week. The reason for that is that we were dealing with hot liquors and to slow down or shut down, we had to slowly shut down and slowly start up again; otherwise we'd clog up the pipes, you see. Everything's got to be cooled down and then started up again. It takes time to do both. We couldn't afford to run our plants on any other basis. So we had to work out swing shifts to fill in the time off.

Of course, eventually, after the Wage and Hours Act was passed, came along a few years later, under that (the first year I think was about 1940, possibly 1938) industry engaged in interstate commerce had to come down from 48 to 46 hours a week; then two years later they were supposed to come down to 44 hours, then down to 40 hours, which is the basic weekly stint now. Under that law, of course, we could cut off two hours every two years over a six year period and cut off the pay too for the additional two hours, so that it came to 46 at the first adjustment.

Well, by the time that came into effect, we were in full activity with collective bargaining, and we worked out schedules

with our men under which we came down, gradually, without reducing the weekly pay. I don't think our men ever suffered any reduction in pay ~~till they reached the 40 hours.~~ When the week came to 40 hours, they were getting 48 hour pay, just as they'd gone from 56 to 48 without any reduction.

We in our company also put into effect the time-and-a-half for overtime before there was any legal requirement of that kind for industries engaged in interstate commerce. We also came to providing a week of vacations, which was new in industry back there in the thirties, for hourly workers. Of course, technicians and officials and what you might call white collar workers in many cases had paid vacations, but our new policy applied to workers, you see, in the mines and the refineries.

We came to the conclusion that we should and could do these things before collective bargaining became mandatory and in a way that was a mistake. I think that probably in our company today old timers in it will say that Albright moved too fast in some of those things because his heart ruled his head, and he wanted to see things done a little faster than they should have been. Because when it came to collective bargaining, we had nothing left to bargain about but wages, whereas the other companies were talking about vacations and time-and-a-half and other features of that kind, while we had already voluntarily given up these trading points, don't you see, trying to be liberal and far-seeing. We therefore reaped a harvest of difficulties.

Q: They weren't willing to come in without any concessions from you?

Albright: We gave the concessions before they asked for them. Nobody asked for these things. We volunteered them. And so when we got around to the point of collective bargaining, why, they came in with demands for excessive increases in wages. Nearly everything else that people were bargaining about at that time had been given to them.

Q: You had nothing to swap?

Albright: No. And to show you what happened -- in the spring of 1942, when we got into a wrangle about wages, the unions demanded too much and we pointed out what we'd been doing ever since 1933, and how far we were ahead of other companies on things that they themselves had been fighting about in other industries. For instance, they had -- these unions had gone to national conventions of theirs and bragged about what they had in Carlsbad, what they'd gotten from the United States Potash Company. And in dealing with a company like the Kennecott Copper, or the Anaconda or some of those, other companies in their bargaining would find themselves faced with the argument that they weren't doing as much for these unions as we were at Carlsbad. Our company, of course, was cited as an outstanding

example of a progressive company.

Then, within a few months after they had used us as a great shining example of a liberal company, they put excessive demands on us -- instead of on our competitors, right there in the potash basin in New Mexico -- and when we didn't yield immediately to what they wanted, they struck us. The reason they gave was that because we'd been the most liberal, they tackled us first, because we were easy and it would be easiest to get things from us. Of course, these reasons were never printed but they were used in the union hall.

So that, of course, hardened us. That changed me from a fellow who was tremendously interested in seeing that they got everything we could give them, to the point where I became a hard bargainer. From that time on, everything they asked for we talked about from every angle and we gave as little as possible for we were pretty far ahead of other mining industries. There was no longer any looking around to see what you could give them, because the more you gave them the more they demanded, and they were going to strike you down rather than the other companies.

Now, that thing happened again in 1948. They struck our company; the Mine, Mill and Smelters Union struck our company in 1948, and we were closed down for a month, and they did nothing at all about the other companies. The other companies operated. And of course, the strike threw all our refinery workers out; the refinery men couldn't work when there was no ore coming from the mine, so they were out of work and on relief, getting their money from the

Unemployment Insurance
~~Social Security~~ funds.

So that's one of the pitfalls that our company encountered, and I don't think anyone can have any regrets about it, because in the long run our policies it worked out. But it does show you what can happen by being too liberal too soon, which is about what we were in our company.

Q: Where did you come by your point of view on labor?

Albright: Well, you see, when I was a student in college, my major, before I went into law, was economics, at the University of California, and I had been a student of economics all the time. I had always been reading economics articles and business articles. I was in Washington, where I was meeting people in the Department of Labor and the Department of Commerce, and I was pretty familiar with the thinking of people, so far as labor relations was concerned. And also I think I'd just naturally been interested in people, in their way of living. Of course, I had come from a very small but nevertheless significant mining country; I'd seen how miners lived, I knew their background, in fact my own family ~~belonged~~ had been pretty close to that type of living. I had felt that in many cases, in many industries, labor was not getting enough out of it, out of their work, enough pay for their work. I had definite feelings about that, and the people knew that when they employed me. They knew how I felt about

labor needs and the future of labor.

I always tried, all the time I was in the business world, to keep very close to our employees. I used to see them in their homes, and when I would visit the mine or refinery I would talk to them, and I had a great many friends among our men all the way from laborers to engineers and technicians of various kinds. I still do that now. Then I go down there, I try to see them. I'm very happy to get word from them. They come in to see me when they get to New York. Most of them who get this far are retired.

Q: You personally are easy to get on with -- was this something you learned in the National Park Service when you were out in Yellowstone, or had you always been, or what? Some men wouldn't dream of going out and talking to their laborers.

Albright: Well, I suppose that more or less comes with your bringing up and of course your personality -- if you're built that way, you like people. And I'll say this -- I think I made it clear on other tapes -- that the National Park Service as a government agency is one in which you'd better keep out of unless you like people. It's not the kind of an agency that you do well in, or at least do your best in, and in which you're happiest, unless you like people. I've told, I think, about my mixing around when I was Superintendent of Yellowstone with the campers. I liked to go to the hotel sometime and look up some prominent person, maybe some very wealthy person, some very

prominent person, and I did that right along. But I was equally happy to go down in the campground and sit around the camp fire and talk with people that had come in there with very meagre equipment to try to get a little vacation at the very minimum cost. I get just as much pleasure out of hearing their stories and hearing about their living and their travels and their hopes and ambitions as I did out of the other people. I was brought up that way, and it was natural for me when I became a company executive to feel the same way about our people.

Q: How did you wind up the problem of putting floors in the people's houses? Did you agree that they might burn up the floors and it wouldn't be the thing to do, or did you find out that they wouldn't? or what?

Albright: Well, I let it go through that winter. But the interesting thing about that was -- which I think proved the other people were wrong and I was right -- that the next year, they had higher wages, and promise of still better wages, and they began to improve their own properties. I think within a year it would have been difficult to find a house that didn't have a wooden floor in it. We let them take excess materials. We didn't adopt a policy of going out and fixing their places up,

by letting them
but we helped them/ to have access to any surplus materials there were, and they did fix themselves up. Some moved back into town, and generally speaking, their conditions began to improve.

As the farmers did a little better, why, they began raising wages. I don't know just how soon wages got above the 25¢. As far as we were concerned, about 20¢ was the compromise, but it wasn't very long before we were up to 25¢ and above.

Of course, those same people, some of them are still there working for us that got 15¢ an hour -- some of the older ones are still working for us, and are now getting on the order of $2 an hour at least just for ordinary labor work. Whereas the miners, who probably in those days were getting around 75¢ an hour, are now getting on the order of $2.75 or $3 an hour.

Q: How were the divisions in wages made? Was this 20¢ wage strictly a racial wage, or did the Mexicans have special jobs that other people didn't have, or what?

Albright: No, it was pretty much a racial wage, down in that country. I don't know of any white people that got as low as 15, 20 cents an hour.

Q: Did the white people do the same work?

Albright: Well, I think in many cases they did.

As I say, they could have gotten that little.

Now, of course another thing about it is, there was a very great reluctance on the part of industry to employ Mexicans. They wouldn't employ them if they could help it, on the ground that they were inclined to be lazy and were not as good workers, and furthermore they were unreliable in the sense that they didn't stick on the job. Because the saying was, "You hire a Mexican, and after he earns $5 he'll lay off, he'll buy a new pair of overalls if he needs them, he'll buy some beans, and some chili, and then he'll gamble the rest of it." Undoubtedly that was a fair description of the characteristics of a good many of those Mexicans. They weren't reliable, and they aren't today, in many cases, in many parts of the state. You find these unreliable people of Mexican origin. They might have been more in New Mexico. But there were vastly more of them in those days. It was another generation. However, there were many lazy, unreliable American-origin people, too.

But we, on the other hand -- that was another thing we did; we saw no reason to discriminate against anybody on a basis of race, creed or education or anything else, so we deliberately employed a lot of these Mexicans. Deliberately. I think we had 180 of them. And the other companies didn't employ any until the war came on and they had to employ them. They couldn't get anybody else to work at some jobs, and the work had to be done.

So we had this interesting th'ng -- another case that was almost exactly like the wages. You'll be interested in this. During the war they adopted a program of preventing racial discrim'nation, ~~FEPC~~ The Fair Employment Practices Commission was appointed (FEPC). Now they're talking about it again, I understand, but this case that I'm go'ng to give you right now is a very good reason why we shouldn't have a compulsory FEPC. This one we have in New York is all right, and in some states. We have it in New Mexico now, something like New York. But here's what happened with the FEPC, and we aga'n were the victims. Just remember that we were the only ones that were employing Mexican workers. But we had a rule that unless you spoke English, you couldn't work in the shops. That was because you wouldn't be able to explain to these people carefully enough how to run machines without being hurt, and without hurting the machines. We had a notice up on the door warning people, reading about the like this, "Don't apply for jobs in these shops unless you can speak English," because of the danger and because of the possibility of impairing the equipment. But it was printed in Spanish and in English

Well, there was a man named Martinez who wanted ~~to be wanted~~ to work in our shops. He couldn't speak English. Now, there's no reason why he couldn't have spoken English, because it was taught in the schools and most of them did speak English, but this man didn't speak English and so he couldn't go in the

shops.

So he made an appeal to the FEPC, that he was being discriminated against, and they promptly sent a delegation of investigators down there, and despite everything we showed them, everything we explained to them, they put in a formal complaint against us. We also had an employment form which had been prescribed for us by J. Edgar Hoover, and on that form we had to take down the race or native origin of people. In other words, an applicant had to say what race he belonged to or what country he came from and so forth, what his national origin was. FEPC recommended — yes, ordered — the abolition of this form, that we shouldn't have any form under which we inquired about where a man came from.

Well, this order was sent to us, and of course I was perfectly furious, because the other companies weren't employing them at all. We were the only ones that were employing them, and yet we were being hauled up before the FEPC.

So I went down, and I got an appointment with the head of the FEPC, who was a man by the name of Lawrence Cramer, who had been governor of the Virgin Islands. For some reason or other, he didn't make good as governor of the Virgin Islands, and he had been turned up in Washington and had been given this job.

I didn't see Mr. Cramer at first. I endeavored to get an appointment with Mr. Cramer and was not able to do it, but I did get an appointment with his assistant. Well, when I reached the

office, which was up on U Street in Washington, as I went in the office I was greeted by a colored girl. She was attractive and personable, and I thought that was all right. She took my name, address, company and so forth. Then she told me to go in the elevator and go up to the executive offices, where I could see this particular man whose name has slipped me at the moment, the assistant to Mr. Cramer.

Well, of course the elevator man was a colored man. And when I got to the floor and passed by some messengers and clerks, they were all colored, and I entered Mr. So and so's room whose name I have forgotten. His secretary was colored, and when I was taken in to see the assistant, he also was a colored man, and he was as big a s Joe Louis -- the biggest colored man I ever saw, big in every proportion, big, burly, tough. So he started in asking me a lot of questions, which I answered. I tried to tell him what my story was. Eventually he let me do the talking, ~~till~~ I explained our situation.

Finally he said, "Well, if that's the case, I'll interrupt the chief, I'll take you in to him."

So this man took me in to Mr. Cramer. Well, Cramer didn't want to listen to me. He said that those orders had to be carried out, and this was an outstanding case and so forth as far as he could see, and I'll say this for his colored assistant, he was sticking up for me fairly well.

Q: Cramer was not colored?

Albright: No, he wasn't colored, he was white. He had a colored shirt on, and I remember it was all ~~torn~~ worn out along the edges, and I wondered why he hadn't been able to buy another shirt. ~~But I told him that I wasn't going to~~ -- Finally I looked him right in the eye and said, "I'm not going to obey your order. I dare you to make me do it. On the contrary, I'm going to the Capitol and talk to our Senators, one of which is Dennis Chavez, who is ~~of Mexican origin himself, or~~ of Spanish origin. himself."

He said he couldn't modify the order. I said, "As to that application form, you'll have to take that up with ~~the FBI~~ Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, because he imposed it upon the company." I said, "I'm not going to be the one to defy Mr. J. Edgar Hoover."

So I went out, and everybody seemed to be kind of helpless. They didn't seem to know what the next move was going to be. I went up to the Capitol and talked it over with Senator Carl A. Hatch, who was very sympathetic with me and said that he thought this was an outrageous thing to perpetrate on our company and he certainly wouldn't be a party to it, if I needed any help to come back to him. But Senator Chavez wasn't in town. So I came back up here, and lo and behold, there was a letter from Mr. Chavez, telling me that he felt he had to champion the cause of these people, and he wanted me to do

something about this Martinez case. He said he felt that the companies down there ought to employ people of Mexican and Spanish origin, and that he was going to insist on it.

Well, I wrote him a letter of two pages in which I called his attention to the people that we had employed and how long we'd been employing them, and suggested he write the other companies and see whether they were employing any people of this origin. Then I said, ~~"I am~~ that I am attaching hereto a sheet that ~~will~~ names of give ~~you~~ him some of the names of some of our people, so that ~~you~~ he may be convinced that they are of Spanish origin," and I think I had six "Chavez" on the list. I had I think seven "Martinez," the same name as that of the man who was making the appeal. I figured, I'll only put down the names of employees where there are four or five of the same name. I didn't try to put down the names of the whole 180 or so that we had, ~~I didn't put down all their names.~~

The letter went off, and about two days later I got a telephone call from Senator Chavez, and the Senator said, if it was all right with me he'd like to dispose of that correspondence, that he was all wrong and sorry he ever brought the subject up. The next time, he said, I should come in to see him and he'd be glad to help me any way he could.

Well, of course, I probably didn't help the other two companies any by that correspondence, but anyway they had to employ Spanish origin people anyway because they couldn't get others down there during the latter part of the war. But that shows you what can happen to a fellow with th

FEPC. Of course, I never went back to FEPC. I never did anything they told me to do and never heard anything more ~~about it~~ from its offices. I suppose the Senators told them to lay off and not fool with this company any more, because we had a perfect record.

Q: It's a shame that you should get held up. Now, in the case of the union, it made some sense -- I don't say it's fair, it just figures -- they know that you people are sympathetic, and I suppose they figure, if we strike US Potash the strike won't last long because they're sympathetic and they'll give in anyway. If we strike somebody else, they might hold out for five years. Or something like that.

Albright: That's the way they reasoned. That's right.

Q: But what about FEPC? Why did they pick you? Was it because Martinez didn't even bother to look at the other companies, knowing you can't get a job there?

Albright: Well, why did the investigators act the way they did? They could see that we employed plenty of Mexicans. They also should have been able to see the sense of not putting somebody in the shops that can't understand English. They ought also to have been able to see that there was no reason why Martinez

couldn't have talked English, spoken English. He could have easily learned English. But they were so anxious for a case. In other words, that was so prevalent among those upstart organizations: they simply had to go out and make a case. They could never give the industry a break.

It was the same way the first time we were called up by the unfair labor practices. A group of investigators There was a fight between two unions out there, and I don't remember just what the fight was. But there was a man named Winters -- he'd had a Slavic name, and had his name changed -- and he'd been in trouble in Pennsylvania in some mining camp. Out there he became a union leader of one of the first unions that came in there, and he was a very tough, difficult fellow. At any rate, he succeeded in getting a case brought before the Labor Board, and they sent an examiner and an attorney out there, at very considerable expense, to investigate this case, and to hold hearings.

Well, the morning before they began the hearings, the examiner, who was to be the judge in the case -- let's call him the judge -- at any rate, he was to sit there and hear the witnesses -- he was sitting in a barber chair, and he told the barber what the decision was going to be in the case. It was going to be against the company. He hadn't even heard the case.

So when he called the hearing, over in the courthouse, he heard this leader, this fellow Winters, and two or three others.

There were only two or three others that Winters could bring in. We had 93 men that wanted to testify on the other side -- our own men in the mine that wanted to present our side of the case, because they felt that we were right. Well, he heard two or three of them, and then he said, "I'm not going to hear any more, the testimony would all be the same," so he wouldn't ~~listen~~ let them testify.

As soon as I got word from ~~town~~ our Carlsbad office -- it had spread around town that this fellow had already made the decision before he ever had any hearings -- I went right down to Washington, went to ~~the~~ both ~~each~~ U.S. Senator, from New Mexico and told ~~him~~ them exactly what was happening at Carlsbad, and predicted that no matter what we did or what we said or what they said, that there would be a decision against us, and that we'd be ordered to do something that wouldn't be right. Some six months later, that's exactly what happened. The man had made up his mind that he was going to condemn the company, before he ever saw any of us, before he ever heard anything.

Now, that's the kind of thing that went on in the early days of the National Labor Relations Board. We've talked about three things here: we've talked about NRA, we've talked about PWPC, and now we're talking about the National Labor Relations Board.

Winters proved to be a very bad boy. He married a girl down there, and he had a little piece of land he was farming, as well as working at the mine. Eventually his union people left him, the

group that he was working with, and something came up that enabled us to get rid of him. I don't remember, maybe he quit, I've forgotten just why he left the company. But eventually he was caught, raking hay, I think, or plowing, with his wife hitched up along with the mule, just like you'd see in some foreign, uncivilized country. After that he left the country. He was one of our first labor leaders.

In 1948 they struck our company, didn't strike the others, struck our mine. That's what I mentioned a few minutes ago. The refinery had to be shut down.

In the 1942 case, the boys said it wasn't a strike; they said they were just holding a committee meeting 24 hours a day. So they just shut everything down, of course. In 1942, it was the Machinists Union at the refinery that closed down our operations, but the so-called "committee meeting" did not last many days.

Q: What was the idea of that?

Albright: Well, it was a strike, of course, but they didn't want to call it a strike, because we had just signed an agreement with them. We had had long negotiations and had just signed an agreement with them under which we had raised their pay and had given them other concessions. I was so suspicious of these leaders down there that I had insisted that the contract be signed by the

mediator, the Federal mediator that had come in there in the case, a new name of Earl Ruddy. He's still a Federal mediator in the West ~~there.~~

But three or four days after the contract was signed, these fellows struck again. Eddie, They had called one of these committee meetings which the they called a strike ~~before~~. Then they finally got the thing all settled up, and the contract was signed, by both parties and by the mediator.

Well, when this happened the second time, I flew down there. I got a night plane and landed in El Paso in the morning, and had to change planes there, and when I got on ~~this~~ the DC-3 there was mediator Ruddy going over ~~there~~ to Carlsbad too. So as soon as we got over to Carlsbad, where our mines are, we had a meeting with Ruddy, and I said, "It's up to you to bring these men back to work."

"Well," he said, "you ought to be able to give them a little bit more."

Of course, that infuriated me, you know, because he'd worked out ~~this thing before.~~ the contract now being violated. So I called up the head of the union in Washington. It was the Machinists Union. He was furious, and he got his men on the phone out there and told them to go back to work, but they wouldn't do it. ~~They wouldn't do it.~~ So we let them stay out.

Q: Were they striking for some specific object?

Albright: Yes, they had something else, I've forgotten what it was, that they wanted, something over and above what had been done and agreed to. But Ruddy, the Federal mediator, representing the National Labor Relations Board, wasn't inclined to try to do anything with them. So we just let them stay out.

One night after they'd been out nearly a week, I was up in my room in the hotel and our attorney was up there with me. We were talking things over. It was raining very hard outside. A knock came at the door, and it was Ruddy. He said the men wanted to go back to work on the midnight shift. This was perhaps 8 or 9 o'clock at night. They wanted to go back to work; they were ready to go back to work; they wanted to go back on the midnight shift.

Well, we said they obviously couldn't go back to work on the midnight shift. They'd have to go back on the morning shift. "That's the best we ~~can~~ could do, and I ~~don't~~ didn't even know if we ~~can~~ could arrange that, but ~~we'll~~ I said we would try." But then I said, "This is understood now, they're going back under the contract?"

"Oh yes," he said, "it's understood."

I said, "Now, there's going to be no more proceedings in this case? We're not going to have trouble in Washington? You're not going to present any papers back in Washington or anything?"

He said, "Oh, no. No. They're going back under the contract."

I said, "We've got to have that specifically understood. ~~The~~ Other people are listening to this, now. This is what you say.

He said yes, it was.

Well, the man went back to work. Buddy went away, wherever he belonged. I came back here. ~~And about six or eight months later, in the fall,~~ you know they had a War Labor Board in those days to consider appeals. ~~There were~~ It was composed of four representatives of business, four representatives of labor, and four representatives of the public. Now, one of the representatives of labor was a man named Holmes who was with this Machinists Union, the same Machinists Union. One of the industry men was Reuben Robertson, president of Champion Fibre Company of Canton, North Carolina, which is right near Asheville. I was in my office here in Rockefeller Center, and the telephone rang, and it was Mr. Robertson on the phone. He said, "You're Horace Albright, aren't you? You used to be in the National Park Service?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "Maybe you'll remember me. We had dealings together in connection with creating the Great Smoky Mountains National Park."

I said, "I certainly do." A lot of Champion Fibre Co. land had to be bought for that park. I didn't buy it, because the land was bought by the state, but I had been down there in connection with some problems, that's why I'd gotten acquainted with him.

He said, "You have a case before the War Labor Board here."

I said, "No!"

He said, "Yes, you have. It's going to be up today, or tomorrow."

I said, "What could it be?"

Well, he gave me the highlights of it, and it was this very case ~~down here~~ we are talking about. This fellow Ruddy and the laborunion had appealed back there, despite their promise to me, made that night.

He said, "You'd better come down here and come in and talk to me."

Q: When they have an appeal, don't they notify you that the thing is being appealed?

Albright: I didn't know a thing about it until this man spoke to me.

So I went down to Washington and had breakfast with ~~him~~ Mr. Robertson at the Raleigh Hotel, and he arranged to convene the Wer Labor Board to hear me at 9:30. Well, we went over there, and all members of the board were there but one -- I've forgotten who he was that was missing. In other words, there were eleven men there.

The case came up for discussion, and I gave them a rundown on it, about as I've given you now, just exactly what happened. But before I finished, this labor man ~~kept~~ began breaking in and said, "This doesn't belong here. Let's stop now and get this straighten out. This case doesn't belong here."

This was Holmes, the labor man.

When I did stop, Holmes said, "This is a matter between Mr. Albright and me. I'd like to have him come down to my office

Q: The other companies' unions were supposed to help them in the strike?

Albright: Yes. But they never assessed them, and never gave ~~them~~ our men a nickel.

Well, ~~things went along, again~~ we didn't have any more trouble, ~~till~~ until the fall of 1949. In the spring of '49, there were very extravagant demands for wage increases. The companies resisted ~~it~~ them, thought they were exorbitant, couldn't meet them, and the unions tried several times to get a strike vote. They didn't succeed, ~~and they passed over without having a strike vote.~~ No contracts were signed, negotiations ~~they~~ just dragged along, the men ~~they~~ just kept working, we'd have a meeting now and then but couldn't get together because of these exorbitant demands.

But, as I say, they couldn't get a strike vote on the question of wages.

Q: You mean the men wouldn't approve a strike.

Albright: No, they wouldn't approve a strike.

But ~~they~~ the union leaders began working in each company on grievances. There was a grievance procedure very ~~sharply~~ carefully worked out, in the contracts, and these grievances had to be settled that way. ~~That wasn't~~ Grievances were not negotiable. ~~Grievances weren't negotiable.~~ They

afternoon Mr. Holmes and I went down there and reviewed the whole case, and Mr. Holmes sent some instructions out there to his people that this contract had to be observed exactly as signed. He and the president of the union both expressed their personal apologies to me for all the embarrassment and trouble they'd caused us.

So there's an experience with a fourth agency, the War Labor Board.

Now, of course, in talking about my experiences, I don't know how far you want me to go on this. ~~We were at war by this time. We didn't have much more labor problems, in the sense~~ ~~that~~ I have mentioned that we had one bad strike in 1948 in our company for one month, the month of July, I think it was, where again they struck us, in connection with a bonus plan we had down there. ~~We all had the same plan.~~ All the companies had the same plan, and we were all offering some small modification in it, trying to meet ~~their~~ the union's wishes but not doing everything the union wanted. So they struck us, and as I said before, they put the refinery out of business. The workers there didn't belong to that union. It was the mine union that struck. Our miners understood that the men in the unions in the other companies' mines were being assessed by the union to give them some help. That was what they were promised, so they said, but as a matter of fact, they never got any help from the union, and after they'd been out a month, they stopped the strike and came back to work.

this afternoon and we'll talk this thing over." He said, "This has no business here at all. I just don't want to consider it here. It shouldn't be here, and the appeal shouldn't have been made, and Mr. Albright's right, but we'll straighten it out. Let's just drop it."

And who do you suppose wouldn't drop it?

Q: Ruddy?

Albright: No. Ruddy wasn't there. Senator Morse -- Wayne Morse of Oregon was one of the public officers -- and he insisted on keeping that case, and I have rarely seen a man so mean and contemptible in the way he acted, and everybody around the table was disgusted with him. Of course, they overruled him, but he just hung on and he was just as mean as he could be. And so you can believe that I have no confidence in Senator Morse.

Q: Well, why?

Albright: That's the kind of a guy he is, even today. He's just built that way. He's just controversial and quarrelsome. He's been that way -- in almost everything that comes up, you'll find him that way. He's utterly undependable, he's an undependable Republican and he's an undependable Democrat, in my judgment. At any rate, they dismissed the case, and in the

were settled, under the grievance procedure, and if we couldn't settle the grievance, it went to arbitration and so forth.

We had word now and then that there were grievance problems being talked about in the union meetings, and threats were being made. Each company was confronted with a different set of demands in connection with grievances. Ours happened to be in connection with the slips that we were handing out for absenteeism. We had a certain colored slip that we'd hand to a man if he was staying away too much without permission. If he stayed away after two or three of these slips were given to him, he was discharged, and I think somebody had been discharged in our company. In another company it was some other grievance, and it a third company it was another grievance -- there were three big companies by that time, three of us operating. This was 1949.

Well, suddenly one morning in November the mine union struck all the companies. And we were shut down for 71 days. We were dealing with this Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union that you've heard of -- a union that's built out of the old Industrial Workers of the World that was a very troublesome union in the West back there about 60 years ago, at the time that the former governor of Idaho was killed. The leader was a man named Bill Haywood. He was known as Big Bill Haywood. Incidentally, I found this summer when I was in Russia that he's buried in the Kremlin wall! Yes, he and John Reed, that famous Harvard graduate, you know,

who wrote the book Ten Days That Shook the World -- and Emma Goldman, a woman Communist we used to have here -- they're buried in the Kremlin walls.

The Mine Mill and Smelter Workers Union was the leader in the excessive demands. Again, the refinery wasn't mixed up in the strike, but the men were out of work just the same. We broke that strike. We never yielded on anything. All the companies took the same position. Finally we got an injunction under the Taft-Hartley Act -- we got an injunction opening the way for men who wanted to go to work to go through the picket lines and go to the mine and the refinery. The men who insisted on holding out were so bitter, so vindictive, that when they were enjoined from picketing the gates they sent their wives out there. Some of them were carrying babies. It was bitter cold. They'd build fires and try to keep warm there by the gates. No one was going to push a woman away from there, you know. The police and state police and sheriffs and so forth weren't going to bother them.

I didn't hear this myself, but my staff people told me (and this happened at the other companies, too, as the women appeared at the gates) that they had been around people who had a proficiency in profanity, but they had never heard anything equal to the profanity that those women hurled at the men as they went through the gates and back to work. Not their own husbands, but husbands of other people, don't you see.

Well, we had given an ultimatum that

by a certain day, if they weren't back to work -- everybody back to work -- that all who were not back to work were out of a job which we had a right to do, under the procedures.

Came that day, there were 400 men in the three companies that didn't go back and were out of jobs. They called themselves the 400. It was a pitiful thing. I was there during all the last days of the strike. The sad part of it was that they were the best paid miners in the whole United States, and that meant in the world. They had the best living conditions that mining people had. Everything about their work and their operations was perfect, as things went. It was the saddest commentary on poor leadership that I ever saw.

I remember one man -- the man who was number 1 on our seniority list -- he was a hoist man. He stopped our manager and me in front of the office the morning that the blow fell, ~~they~~ as the strike were out of work. He had a family. He stopped us, and started to talk to us, and he started to cry. I have never seen such big drops, those drops would fall on the sidewalk and ~~just~~ make a big splash; I think they were as big as a quarter when they hit the sidewalk. The realization that they'd stayed out too long, don't you see. Now, of course, we offered to take back some of these men, but they had to go to the bottom of the list. The other men were immediately moved up, all the way along, to the higher places. This man, for instance, had to go back to knocking down rocks, and things he had been doing ten years before -- he ha

to go back to them, if he were going to work for us. And he did. He did it. He went back in there and went to work. He had a family to look after. But they lost the jobs they had, and of course some of them we didn't have jobs for, because we'd been employing new men. In trying to keep our operations going, we'd been employing new men.

Q: What on earth were they so pigheaded about?

Albright: ~~Leaders~~. Their leaders wouldn't let them go back, and they were outside leaders, too. They weren't people who belonged in town. The man who was bossing the job was a fellow named Larsen who came from over ~~around~~ Arizona someplace. Well, you can look up the history of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. You'll find some very interesting things about them. They're a very bad union. Eventually they pretty well broke up at Carlsbad. ~~They did so many bad things down there that...~~ They're still there, in one company, I think, but they're not in our company. They've been out of our company for a long time now ~~ago~~. I don't remember the circumstances now under which they left. ~~It was a vote;~~ they were voted out; but it took ~~them~~ the outside leaders a long time to see what was happening, ~~you see.~~

I remember one fellow, an awfully nice man. His wife was a waitress in the hotel. She used to wait on me.-- Every time she'd wait on us, she'd talk a little bit about the strike. So one morning she wanted to know if I wouldn't see her husband.

If I'd talk with him. I said, "Yes, but you know I can't threaten him, and I can't promise him anything one way or the other, I can't promise him we're going to do what he wants us to do and I can't threaten him, I can just talk to him. Under the law we can't do anything to influence these men."

So he came up to my room, and I talked to him for an hour, and just let him pour his heart out. And I'd say, "Well, if you don't like what they're doing, why do you stay with them? I can't promise you anything or threaten you. If you stay on here, the way this thing is going, there's an awful lot of people bound to lose their jobs, because we're now in the clear to operate our plants. Under this injunction we can operate our plants, and we don't have to keep you."

Well, he wavered, one day he was going to go back, the next day he wasn't going to to back. She was just frantic, you know, wanting him to go back. She was terribly opposed to this moving woman out on the line, wouldn't go herself. But I don't think that kind of thing happened too much, but I do believe it happened often in the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers.

Now, in 1946, there was a big strike at Anaconda at Butte, where this same union smashed up the windows of the company men, the company employees. I remember one case, they took a piano out and chopped it up in the street. Oh, there's a whole fair-sized pamphlet telling the extraordinary things the men of th

union did.

One of the worst things they did, these miners, they'd take a sack and wrap it up, wrap ink in it or other stuff of that kind, and throw it through a window, just to make an awful mess of things. They did that sort of thing at Butte and other places. They didn't do that at Carlsbad. Nobody was hurt down there.

But in all those years, in the 21 years that I was executive officer of this company, we had only those three strikes: 1942, 1948, 1949-50. And remember that in the 1942 disturbance the boys insisted they were only holding a "committee meeting" -- around the clock!

Q: Had you been un-unionized before 1942, or was that just the first time you had difficulties?

Albright: The first union we ever had was the Machinists' Union, IAM, International Association of Machinists. That's a great big union. They've got their own building in Washington. I had some acquaintance with those people. I think in our tape on the CCC I told you about Robert Fechner being made the director of the CCC, and one of his associates assistant director, Jim McEntee. These men were vice-presidents of the IAM.

Well, one day, along about 1938 or so, I was going through our shops in the refinery, and I stopped to talk with a man named John Hamilton. He said he'd seen something in the paper to the effect that I had been concerned with organizing the Civilian Conservation Corps, and he

wanted to know if I knew Bob Fechner. I said I certainly did. Well, he'd been an old buddy of Bob Fechner. So I wrote Bob Fechner and told him that we had this man working for us, and hoped that if he was ever down around Carlsbad, he'd drop into our shops and see this man.

Bob Fechner said he certainly would, and when he was in New Mexico visiting camps, he did go down to Carlsbad, because there were some camps down there, and he went out and he saw ~~this man.~~ John Hamilton

Well, I don't know whether it was before or after Fechner saw him, but he told me, "You know, I'm an old union man. I've belonged to the Machinists Union for--" he gave me the number of years --"always carried a card, and there are some more of the boys here belong to the union, and we've talked a little bit about having a branch of the IAM here. I just wondered what you'd think about it, Mr. Albright?"

Again, with my perspective that I held, I said, "I don't see why you shouldn't have a union, if it's something that you want, if it'll make you feel better."

"Well," he said, "we could talk things over, and maybe we could take it up with the company."

I said, "That's conceivable. If you want to have a union here, it's all right with me." And a short time afterwards, they did bring in the International Association of Machinists, and they've been there ever since. Most of those old-time machinists are dead

now. But I knew them very well, and was very fond of some of them. They were very fine men.

But theunion sooner or later got infiltrated with some radicals or agitators, ~~or somebody would come in from the outside.~~ Some roving supervisor or executive would come in from the outside and tell them they ought to make some more demands, excessive demands ofone kind or another, and so sooner or later we were in trouble with that union too. That's the one, in fact, that caused me to have all the trouble during the war, with the War Labor Board --that was Holmes's union.

Q: Do you recall any other labor difficulties?

Albright: No, I don't recall any more labor difficulties for our company, Those were the outstanding times. Almost every year or every two years -- wetried to have at least a two year contract -- I think once we had a three year contract, but usually we tried for a two year contract-- every year, when contracts came up, there was a lot of discussion. Sometimes it would last for several months before we would find a basis of agreement that we could go along with.

Q: Did you negotiate by companies or did the three companies negotiate together?

Albright: Well, for years we negotiated by ourselves, and that's something we learned was very difficult to do.

For instance, I remember our contracts expired in February, and the Potash Company of America's expired in November, and I think the International Minerals and Chemicals, which was the third company in those days, expired in May. Well, the unions would take all they could get from us in February. Then, when they ~~struck the International and~~ started negotiating with the International in May, they'd start from ~~where~~ what they had gotten from us, you see. They didn't start from where the International Contract left them, they'd start from what they'd gotten from us. Then maybe they'd extract a little something more from the IMCC, and then by the time November or October rolled around, they'd start from what they got from the IMCC, so by the time they came around to us the following February, we had a combination of what they'd gotten from the other two, to start with. We didn't start from where we left off ourselves the year before. So we came to the conclusion we had to get ~~them~~ all contracts to expire on the same day. We had a battle to get that done. That had to be negotiated. We had to negotiate one year for only a three months' contract, I think, as we'd decided that May was the time we wanted to have our negotiations.

Q: May, I suppose, came at the end of your heavy season?

Albright: It came at the end of our heavy season.

So we finally got that. That's the date today.

Well, then we decided that so far as the economic features of a contract were concerned -- that is, the wages and hours and the fringe benefits, relating to sick leave and vacations and that sort of thing -- we'd not only have to negotiate at the same time, but we'd have to negotiate on the same principle. We'd all have to have exactly the same position in the contract. It couldn't be different, in the contract. ~~So then we~~ employed a very able labor lawyer by the name of Rufus G. Poole, who had been in both the Interior Department and the Labor Department. He'd been assistant chief counsel or chief counsel of the Wage Hour Division in the Department of Labor. I think he'd been assistant solicitor of the Department of Labor. He is today the attorney for all of us, on the economic features of labor contracts. He'sasince moved from Washington to Albuquerque, ~~so~~ he lives down there. He's one of the ablest labor lawyers in the country. We all have very great confidence in him, and I think theunions themselves have great confidence in him, although they are inclined to call him "Ruthless Rufus." But I think they respect him. At any rate, he gets along all right with them. We haven't had any troubles now for -- well, we've had no strikes in our company. I think there have been some "~~dickies~~" Quickies as they call them in some of the other companies on some special item.

~~Nothing in ours.~~

Q: By and large, have you taken any efforts to resist unions? You invited the IAM in, at least you agreed to its coming in. Have you actively at any time fought any of the unions coming in? You agreed that you weren't going to give in, but did you fight in any way?

Albright: What do you mean, fight?

Q: Did you have any kind of warfare with the employees, keep anyone out of the plant?

Albright: Well, when they strike, they're shut ~~out of~~ down the plants, and then they picket so nobody else can get in. But they didn't picket the officials. They didn't do that.

Now, the first thing they did, in the big strike of 1949 when they shut down all the companies, was picket the railroads ~~in there~~ to our plants, so they couldn't go in and get potash and deliver it to customers. The warehouses, you see, had a lot of potash in them, and it was prior to the big fertilizer season, and of course the fertilizer people were making up their fertilizers and they needed potash. So the thing to do was to keep the railroad from getting it. That would be the deadliest thing they could do, if they could get away with it. So they blockaded the railroad to the refineries.

Well, the railroad went before the courts and got an injunction taking them off the tracks, so they could go in and get

potash. So we loaded it with our ~~advisory~~ supervisory staff and so forth. We filled a lot of orders. We were able to do that.

But then, of course, came the jockeying for position, to get our mine and refinery opened, and we did that under, I think it's called a Section 10 injunction, which you can get after the negotiations have gone on for some time. You can force the breaking of the picket lines. You can have the pickets enjoined from stopping people from going into your property, in order to let men go in who want to go in. I imagine that's the reason why right today General Electric has been able to keep so many of its plants going, because if they attempted to stop these other men from going in the plants -- if the strikers did -- ~~they~~ the Company would be able to get an injunction, and that would take the pickets away entirely. So they probably don't interfere with anybody who wants to go in there and work, except their own men. Now, they're disciplining their own men. They'd probably do that with goons, they'd punish them one way or another, throw them out of the union. Of course, I don't think there's a union shop in General Electric.

Q: Now, you had these women picketing at the gates.

Albright: They were wives of the strikers, ~~wives of the picketers.~~ The pickets had been enjoined.

Q: Had there been anything more violent than profanity?

Albright: Oh, no, the women would just stand there and shake their fists and swear at the men.

Q: How about any of the men? Were there fights or riots of any sort?

Albright: Occasionally there were some encounters, but I don't remember ~~anything about it too~~ much about them.

There really wasn't much fighting. It was a contest, but it was kind of a contest like you might say Nixon and Kennedy are fighting. That's about the way the fighting was, mostly talk.

When I look back on my experiences with unions, they've been pretty good. I think ~~a p[illegible]~~ men ~~men?~~ should have unions if they want them. I'm not favorable to the union shop. I don't think a man should be compelled to join a union. We've never had a union shops in our plant. It's always been open shops, ~~to that extent. They're~~ Our employees are not compelled to join a union. On the other hand, if they do join, then we've gone the whole way by deducting dues, what they call check-off -- we deduct their dues from their pay, so that they have to keep up their membership. Unless they get out of the union their dues are deducted ~~right there.~~ each month. Many of these unions wouldn't last if they didn't have the check-off, because the men just wouldn't pay.

Q: Simply because the men are prodigal or because the union is

not that good?

Albright: They're not that good, or they've gotten all they wanted out of the union.

Lots of times the unions are weakened by the good men in the union not caring enough about them. They become bad unions because the good men -- I'm talking about the local people -- get tired of all this bickering. Now, I don't know if it would apply around big cities, but in a mining camp -- I'm mostly concerned with mining and refining operations in the more remote sections of the country -- there are always some people who have no home ties. They're not married, or their marriages are not happy, so they're inclined to spend their time around pool-rooms, and they don't go home after work, and they just cook up some new idea, and these bickerings and quarrels that grow into more serious things in connection with collective bargaining are very often started that way.

Then the sensible men, the men of good judgment who should be guiding these unions, get tired of it, and they won't take office. They want to look after their social affairs, or they want to be out with their family, or they want to engage in church work, and so they're not around the union hall. Sometimes a union will be run by the poorest men in it. They'll get to be leaders by default.

I remember one fellow we had -- he's still down there, in the

refinery -- a big, strong fellow, and a man of good judgment. In fact, he was selected by the government during the war for some high place in connection with the labor affairs in the state. He was president of the union. But he got so tired of the eternal bickering and unreasonable demands of this crowd that was irresponsible, that he just washed his hands of it. When his term was up, he just quit. He never would take another office. Never goes tomeetings. Pays his dues. I've seen him sitting around the hotel lobby at night -- he'll come in to see somebody-- he's always smoking cigars. I've talked to him and said, "Why don't you go back and be active in the union?"

He said, "It's no use. I just get tired of it," he said. "I've done my job." He wouldn't go on.

That happens a lot of the time. Undoubtedly, most every union has got a nucleus of very able men, because you can't get together a group of one, two, three, four hundred people that hasn't got some very able fellows in it. Fellows that probably should have gone on to college and would be high in the business or professional world, if they'd had more chance. But they're just too intelligent and too sensible to put up with all the monkey business that goes on, and on the other hand, they are too few to carry anything. They can't sustain themselves in the organization, because the other type outnumber them. That's something you see in many places, and we had it down there at various times. Whether it's true now or not, I don't know.

Q: I want also to ask you about the ~~potash~~ potash business. When you came here, I suppose about the first major problem to confront you was developing a market, wasn't it?

Albright: ~~Well, yes, of course the market was the main job.~~

Well, yes, the market of course was the main job. You see, potash is ~~one of the~~ -- one or more of the potassium chemicals. The chief ingredient is the element potassium, sometimes confused with phosphate. ~~There~~ It got its name, potash, ~~was~~ because in the early days they used to leach wood ashes in a pot -- naturally it would be boiled in this pot and leached and you'd get a potassium product which they used in making soap. (and glass, but mostly soap.) If you readthe early accounts of the settling of the colonies over here, Salem for instance, and even Jamestown, you'll note that one of the things they established very soon was a potash plant. There's been quite a little bit written about the potash in Jamestown. I think Stephen Vincent Benet, in his poem, Westward America, that epic poem -- I don't know whether he ever got it finished, I don't believe he did, before he died -- he mentions potash in connection with the settlement of Jamestown. When they had the 300 anniversary of the settlement of Salem, they built a potash plant ~~in Salem,~~ Massachusetts, and I think it may still be there to be seen.

Q: You mean, as an exhibit?

Albright: As an exhibit, yes --reconstructed.

Well, potash was made from wood ashes clear up to the middle of the 19th century; as late as around 1850 one of our biggest exports was wood ashes. The product came from New England, the cutting down of the great forests of New England and burning them for ashes, making potash. One of the centers of that was Bellows Falls, Vermont. If you go up here to Old Sturbridge, ~~those historical buildings there,~~ where they brought in historic structures, you'll find the mansion there at the head of the street, called the Salem House, is the home of a potash executive or plant ~~holder~~ owner or whatever you want to call him of around the middle of the 19th century, although that house is older, a great deal more than a hundred years old--built earlier, I don't know just when it was built.

But then they discovered mineral potash in Germany, and it was found there in various forms, usually in this form of potassium chloride or ~~sylvite~~ sylvinite. That's the form in which we find it in New Mexico. It was found over there in Germany, and then German scientists found that it was very valuable fertilizer material. Before that it hadn't been used for fertilizer.

Q: It had just been a soap ingredient?

Albright: It had been used for that and other chemicals, of course, and many chemicals, medicinals and so forth, pharmaceuticals. In the middle of the 19th century it was found out it was a plant food of very great importance, and of course that gave it the feature of big tonnage, you see.

So the Germans, with their characteristic energy, not only developed potash mines but put out publications and propaganda devices to encourage the use of potash, and it gradually grew, through the last 40 years of the 19th century and into the 20th century. Up to the First World War they had a monopoly on potash in the world. It killed off the wood ash business. Wood ashes were too expensive. It would have been killed off anyway, because the forests would have been gone.

Q: You mean if you were going to use it for fertilizer.

Albright: Yes. Louis Bromfield, the famous author who developed Malabar Farm out in Ohio, told me one time that out in one of his fields there were certain big round patches where the corn or wheat grew very much higher than anywhere around. You could look out and see these big stalks, very much higher. He said they studied the soil there, and they found that it was very high in potassium. Well, those big

round spots were the sites where they had piled trees, felled stumps and brush, when they were clearing the forests out there in Ohio, way back in the early days, and they'd burned them in the clearings; that potash had stayed in the soil and was still there. It would have been exhausted sooner or later, of course, because the plants take it out. (Query: is that why blueberries grow in burned-over soil?) Very likely there is more potash in such soil.

Well, that's why potash came to be used in very large quantities in soil building. In Europe they went in for it extensively. Here, we realized about 1911 that we should be doing something about potash, and the government authorized some explorations about that time, but nothing was found. Then we got into the First World War. Germany had not only developed mines in Prussia and in Thuringia and Hannover, and around the Harz Mountains -- it used to be called Stassfurt salts at that time, because there were some mines at a town by that name -- but about 1904, a good potash field had been discovered in Alsace, near the town of Mulhouse, not very far from the Rhine, a little below Basle, Switzerland, and had been developed by the Germans.

We went into the First World War, and of course it was impossible, on account of the embargo, to get any potash, and this

country found itself in very bad shape. The Germans ~~took over~~ had to the United States the French fields, so they couldn't get any potash out, ~~and~~ I think there were 12? different plants, built practically all financed by the government except at Searles Lake in California where it was done by the American Potash and Chemical Co., though it wasn't called that ~~by~~ at that time. They finally developed a plant there to take potash and borax and other chemicals out of the brines of this lake. But they were just beginning to make some potash when the war broke out.

As I say, they had 12? different plants and they made it from ~~some~~ sands down here in New Jersey, from sands in Nebraska, from brines in Utah, and even from seaweed. There was a big seaweed plant on the Pacific Coast.

Q: They didn't go back to the method of burning wood?

Albright: No, they didn't go back to that. That was too expensive. They never would have gotten anywhere with that. The tonnage requirements were enormous. I've seen statements to the effect that about 50 million dollars was expended, in one way or another, on all these potash plants, trying to get some potash; and the most that was ever made in a year, I think, was around 25,000 tons. And the cost -- well, it sold as high as $500 a ton. But the war, of course, didn't last too long, and by the time the war ended, why,

some of these plants were turning out quite a little potash. Possibly by 1919 it might have been 100,000 tons. I don't know just what the potential was, of all these various operations, some small, some fairly large, but they were very expensive, every one of them, and they all folded up except the American Potash and Chemical Company, a corporation in California.

Then, when the war was over, our government was really determined ~~they~~ it would never be caught again without potassium, and appropriations were made authorizing the survey of the West, particularly the public lands, and the ~~drawing~~ drilling of core tests to find out what was under the earth, and the whole west was fairly well ~~covered~~ explored. The U.S. Geological Survey ~~and everybody was instructed in that~~ located the areas in which to look for potash. When drilling was undertaken, the Bureau of Mines participated and the chemical ~~departments involved~~ laboratories of both bureaus studied the core tests. but they never found any potash that was usable. They did run across a complex potash mineral an example of which is out here in our showcase called polyhalite. Polyhalite is quite extensive in Texas and some other places. It's a very complex potassium mineral that has also magnesium and sulphates and ~~has probably some~~ gypsum. But they never found any way to get the potash out of it, so that it could be used.

W: You mean any practical way? They could do it in the laboratory.

Albright: Oh, I think you could, yes, but I think the whole process

would be so expensive and complicated that it would never be worthwhile. So polyhalite has been written off as a useless mineral.

But of course, after the War there was much drilling for oil all through the West and one of the companies that was drilling was an independent operator, the firm of Snowden and McSweeney. That was made up of the Snowden brothers, two brothers, George G. and James H. Snowden, and Henry McSweeney. Now, Henry McSweeney was born and reared in Oil City, in Pennsylvania, not very far from where oil was originally discovered in this country. The Snowdens were also Pennsylvanians, and they had formed a partnership -- oh, I suppose it must have been back around the time of the first World war. They had been successful in finding oil in the Midwest, and had gotten down into Texas. George Snowden died about 1919, but Mr. McSweeney and James Snowden were still operating things in the 1920's.

They had a drilling outfit working in New Mexico in 1925, under the direction of a man named V.H. McNutt, and they one day discovered, in this drilling operation, in the rock coming up through the drill-hole, something that attracted McNutt's eye. He thought it looked like potash, and he ~~got up~~ took samples of it and sent them to Washington to the Geological Survey, and also to the company's laboratories in Fort Worth. And it was potash, It was just the very thing they were looking for: it was ~~Sylvite~~ Sylvinite. The Government bureaus

Q: Is that astonishing? Would anyone drilling for oil who was in at all a responsible position recognize sylvite?

Albright: Well, I don't think everybody would. I think it would take a smart engineer, which V. V. McNutt was.

Q: In other words, it took some training.

Albright: Oh, he was a very skilled mining engineer. He was a graduate of Missouri School of Mines, one of the best in the country. He was a very able engineer.

Well, of course, it was a sensation, finding this mineral. People were very much excited from one end of the country to the other, that potash had been discovered.

Shortly afterwards, or about that time, someone found it in Utah. I'm not sure but that they actually encountered it before the discovery at Carlsbad. I don't recall just what the dates were. The one at Carlsbad was the one that the Geological Survey had an opportunity to study, and the word got out that potash had been found.

Well, of course, you know -- I've explained already on the tape -- there are two different kinds of mining laws. One is for the lode claims, that you file for metals, like gold and silver and copper and lead and zinc, where you can get title to a body of ore, provided you file within all the rules. You can

stake a claim of 1500 feet by 600 feet, over the lode, and you can follow it on its ~~death~~ dip, you can get patent to that land, and with associates, of course, you can get a considerable tract of land, if you take associates in with you, because each person can file a claim. Or, if you want just to work on the surface and not dig deep, why, you can file placer claims, and you can get 20 acres for placer mining. That's particularly used in washing sands for gold and that sort of thing.

~~Then,~~ In 1920, they passed the leasing law, and that applied to these stratified deposits that were laid down in old seas. It also applied to oil and gas.

Q: I don't quite understand what the geological difference is.

Albright: Well, I would say that these metals are probably intrusions, forced through the rocks through faults and by the interior forces of the earth, and in many cases they might be of volcanic origin -- ~~the forces are~~ -- that forced these minerals into these rocks. ~~That~~ Such metal-bearing rocks they call ore in place. ~~Now, these other --~~

Q: You still have to mine it out?

Albright: Oh, yes, you have to mine it out, ~~sure, and you mine it in very much the same way, in many cases.~~

But on the other hand, if ~~they're~~ minerals are laid down in old seas, or if they are fossil deposits like coal, it's a different formati completely. That type of formation, if it's in the public domain, ~~you have to get the land~~ has to be held by lease. You do not get a patent, can have the deposit in fee.

Q: Why did the legal difference arise? Was it conservationists getting after somebody?

Albright: I don't recall just the circumstances under which that law was passed in 1920, but I think it grew out of the difficulty of handling oil and gas under the mining laws. You went out and found an oil well, 1500 feet or 20 acres wouldn't be any good to you. You had to have some kind of a coverage of much more land and the leasing system was the answer. If you need public domain now, in the case of oil, you can take 2500 acres, and form associations and get more acres, which they unitize, as they call ~~the~~ a group of many bodies of land, and then drill it.

Q: Did this problem also arise partly because, as I understand an oil well, when youdrill into it, you draw the oil in from surrounding areas, and you might well be drawing from under somebody else's land?

Albright; Exactly. That's the reason why the present Senator fro

Oklahoma, Kerr, when he was governor of Oklahoma, put oil wells down in the grounds of the capitol, and they're still there, pumping oil, because he didn't want the state to lose its share of the oil in the ground there. Governor Kerr spoiled the capitol and the grounds, and it looks like the dickens, but they're getting money out of it, so they let the oil wells stay there. It was a monstrous thing for him to have done, but he did it and that stands.

I was going to say, our Snowden-McSweeney people were drilling under an oil and gas lease, and so they had to get permits to do something about potash. The law provided for potash exploration permits. Under a permit, one can get the rights to explore 2640 acres, and then he has to put down a certain number of holes, which we call core tests. That is, a diamond drill takes out a core of the earth, so that you have laid out before you a cross section of whatever territory you drilled. Then at your leisure you can examine every piece of it, from top to bottom. It's not like drilling for oil, because mostly they drill for oil with a different kind of a bit and they don't save the core. It costs an awful lot more money to core an area.

Q: How did McNutt happen to have a core in the first place, then?

Albright: He didn't have a core. He just picked potash crystals out of the stuff that came up, sent up, you see, by the drill. But as soon as they could take a core test they could study it more. And of course, they couldn't go in and build a mine on that first discovery. They had to find, identify and delineate a body of commercial ore, and that they did.

Q: I suppose it was conceivable that there might have been potash there in a layer a quarter of an inch thick, of no consequence at all?

Albright: That's exactly right. They had to get a core to find out.

So Snowden and McSweeney got these permits and began testing for a commercial body of ore, which they did not find until 1929. It took about four years to find it. Then they found some very rich ore. Next they went for a lease. Under the law, because of the discovery they could get a lease, and that meant that lease would be for 20 years. Under a potash lease, they had to agree to spend a certain amount of money within a certain time, in building the mine and refinery, and then had to pay a royalty on the value of the product, and then had to have the mine open to inspection, obey safety rules and all that sort of thing.

Q: This seems like a much more -- well -- social is the word I'm thinking, but I don't mean particularly "socialist" -- public-spirited kind of proposition than the old outright sale of mines.

Albright: Well, I would say it was in the interests of conservation. I'll stick up for the leasing system on the grounds of conservation, and I think that the probabilities are that someday or other all mining will be done on a leasing system. You can't get hold of any property to mine in these eastern states, except on a leasing basis, because the land belongs to private owners. These laws only apply in the public domain, you see, but of course we have got an awful lot of public domain in the West.

~~So, having found the ore body, then they --~~

Q: Can I just put in one more question here? Do you know the background of the requirements with respect to safety practices and all that sort of thing? This is not an obvious connection with the leasing system, although it's clear that public-spirited people are back of both, I think. But do you know what led to rules such as that?

Albright: Well, of course the Bureau of Mines has been interested in mine safety for a good many years, and began developing mine safety

equipment and policies, back before the Bureau of Mines was created, when it was part of the Geological Survey. About 1911 the Bureau of Mines was created, and the head of it was a man Joseph A. Holmes, who was a very distinguished mining engineer but who was terribly interested in safety. One part of the activity of the Bureau of Mines had always been safety of mine so that it was very natural that one of the places where the federal government would enforce sound safety practices would in mines that it had some control over.

As a matter of fact, safety, like education, in mining has always been a matter for the states, and is today. The fe government today -- unless something's happened very lately -- the federal government today doesn't have control and inspect of all mines. That is done under state laws, and most states very stringent safety rules and regulations, under laws that been passed, more or less standard laws, I suppose, now.

So mine safety is naturally something that the federal government would impose upon its lessees. Mining companies ~~Would~~ have to conf to the strictest standards as far as mine safety was concerne

There's a very interesting connection with that -- I'll just interpolate it, as we might not think of it later: One the things that they require is that there be in every mine area a trained safety crew, that is, a special crew that can go in and rescue men who are overcome, either by a disaster

or from gases and so forth. They must be trained in first aid and the handling of everything that pertains to a mine disaster. Down in New Mexico, because we were the first company to open a potash mine, we trained crews. We had several highly trained crews.

When the other mines came in, later on, the government didn't require them to train crews because they already had them in the basin, don't you see. Again, we were penalized for being a pioneer....

That reminds me of a story, about the disadvantages of being a pioneer. I remember there was a story told in Sequoia Park about a fellow named Clough who discovered a cave, and it was a good cave; it's still an important cave in California, although it's never been developed, people don't see it, there are so many other caves that are open. But before Clough could get title to the cave -- in those days he could have gotten title to it, probably under the mining laws or some other laws -- but before he got a chance to get title to it, Congress made it a part of the Sequoia National Park and therefore prevented him forever from getting title.

So he kept complaining around to every official he'd see about the way he'd been treated. He was a pioneer, he'd found this cave on his own money and time. He'd gone down into it and explored it and so forth, but now he was cheated out of it; something should be done about it.

Well, he pestered one park superintendent, who was one of these military men -- I don't know whether it was Hugh Johnson or not-- until finally he said to him, "Mr. Clough, did you ever hear of Christopher Columbus?"

He said, "Yes."

"What did he do?"

"He discovered America."

"That's right. Well, do you know whatever became of him?"

Clough said, "Why, no. I guess he died."

"Yes," the superintendent said, "Yes, he did. He died in jail, in chains. You can see what happens to an explorer."

That was somewhat the way it was with us down there. Being an explorer or a pioneer, anything could happen to you.

At any rate, after we discovered potash and discovered a commercial body that we knew we could develop, then our people had to get a lease. ~~The~~ A lease could be for ~~7500~~ 2640 acres. ~~But~~ Our Company got their lease in 1929. Again in 1933, ~~they~~ we got 7500 acres under leases, so by the time I came into the company, ~~they~~ the Company had about 15,000 acres under lease from the federal government.

Q: Is there any trick to getting a lease, or is it strictly automatic?

Albright: Well, the federal government's got to give it to you, if you make a discovery. They've got to recognize the discovery.

And I'll say this for them, they were very fair about it. They not only gave the company the land it wanted, in the amount it wanted, but they were very liberal in the royalty, because they knew the company had to spend an awful lot of money to get this mine opened, and even when it got the shaft down it might not know for sure an ore body would be there. It didn't know what it was going to find when it got down to the ore, how long it would last. So the government put the royalty at a low rate -- I think it was only 2%. The standard rate for that sort of thing is 5%. That's what we're paying now, after our first 20 years was up. But at first, we had a very reasonable royalty, and we had very reasonable men to deal with. Our people have no reason to feel any regrets about having been required by the lease, the law, the regulations, to operate under the jurisdiction of the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines.

The company started to build the mine after getting the lease. We were required to move reasonably quickly in developing it, because otherwise the lease might be cancelled. The lease required the company to spend I think something like $200,000 in the first three years, or something like that. Of course, we spent a lot more than that.

First, these people who discovered this potash were oil people. Furthermore, they were not refiners. They were independent oil producers. They were explorers. When they found oil and developed an oil well, they'd sell the product and it

would go into a pipeline and go to some other company for refining. Snowden and McSweeney did not have an oil refinery.

So they were in no position to open a potash mine. They'd never had any experience in mining. So they endeavored to interest some mining company -- they tried with the Anaconda Company and Kennecott Copper, or the predecessor of Kennecott Copper, Phelps Dodge, and even companies like American Cyanamid who had some mining operations.

Well, for two reasons, no mining company in America would or could be interested. First, their officers said the mine would be so remote that the freight costs would be outrageous, they never could compete with the foreigners. In the second place, because the material was being bought by farmers, there'd be no prospect of ever getting a tariff. An American producer never could be protected against foreign competition, and it was formidable, the competition was -- the German French cartel -- so mining companies just didn't see any hope in it.

In the meantime, going back to the First World War, the Pacific Coast Borax Company at that time had learned a lot about potash. They had endeavored to make potash on Searles Lake, where the American Potash and Chemical Co. had its plant, but they had not been successful.

Q: That's the other potash company.

Albright: The other potash company -- the only one that survived after the First World War.

Q: That was a lake brine operation. They didn't have a mine.

Albright: No, they had a lake. Its surface was hard crystalline formation but under this was brine, and our Pacific Coast Potash Co. had endeavored to make potash out of the brine there. They owned quite a tract of land -- I guess they still do -- called Borasolvay. But they knew a lot about potash, and that being an English company -- it was owned in England -- they were in a position to know a great deal about the use of potash, which is much more intensively used in Europe. They were very familiar with it, and being engaged in foreign trade, may have dealt in potash as they did with borax. They were the leading producers of borax in the world, and they were much more familiar with foreign trade, and this potential potash enterprise didn't seem to frighten them as much as it did the other companies.

Well, they looked into it and found the mine had very rich ore and a flat seam, and that once this bed was reached it ought to be fairly simple to mine it. They made the necessary calculations, and they decided they could succeed. So they offered to buy an interest in the property, and it ended up by the Snowden-McSweeney people selling a half interest to the Borax Company.

Q: Did Snowden McSweeney seek out Pacific Coast Borax, or vice versa?

Albright: I think what happened was that Pacific Coast Borax Company sent an engineer over there to look at it. They got acquainted that way, and then the Snowden McSweeney people really looked them up. Both had offices here in New York. The negotiations were here.

Not only did the company buy a half interest in the property, but they agreed to undertake the building of the mine. They had engineers who could build the mine and refinery, because that was the same kind of business they were in. They undertook to be leaders in the development, and they undertook to try to arrange the financing. And I'll say this for the British -- they couldn't find financing in this country, not only couldn't get mining companies to interest themselves in these properties but they couldn't get banks to lend any money, and the British sent over money from Europe, when they only got $3 or so for their pound. In other words, if they wanted to buy dollars, it cost them real money to do it in those days. Our dollars were very expensive

So through 1930, the mine was under construction, and in January 1931 it was completed, and the United States became the first miners of potash in the Western Hemisphere. Our mine was the first potash mine in the whole Western Hemisphere, and it was a very beautiful mine. The ore, as you can see from that bottle there, was a nice pink color, and it was in a flat seam, and it was mined by what we call the ~~Reuben color~~ room and pillar system. That is,

in mining the company would mark pillars to hold up the roof, and then they'd mine out rooms, you see. The mine was and is really a beautiful thing to go into, and people from everywhere wanted to see it.

1933 was the Geophysical year, and we had geologists from all over the world here in the United States that year. Naturally geologists wanted to see that mine.

The refinery was built during the latter part of '31 and finally opened in '32, in September, and we were in business, mining and refining potash.

Of course, answering the question you asked a while ago, then we had to develop a market. Well, I'll say this for American manufacturers, of both chemicals and fertilizers -- they were very glad to see an American industry come in. They weren't ready to cut loose from their old connections abroad, because they were getting good service, but they were willing to give us a share. While I think probably the first year we were in business we had to make some price concessions, in order to get our product scattered around and in use, we didn't have to make much. Business came to us quite readily, although we soon developed an excellent sales staff, which we've always had.

Q: Evidently, very shortly after you got started or perhaps even before you'd gotten started, other people were after potash, too, and the Russians started coming up.

Albright: Well, the Russians had discovered potash, possibly before we did. I don't know when the Russians discovered potash. We've never seen any history of their mines. They've got potash -- they've got at least two properties, two very big ones, up on the head of the Volga. One is at Berezniki, and the other ~~--I don't remember the name of the other property. But~~ At Solikamsk. They make a good deal of potash, and they shipped a little over here in the 1930's, not much. It never was in good shape. It was dirty and got very hard in the ships. It's hydroscopic, you know; it picks up moisture. ~~They~~ The Russians never had any big market over here.

Q: So your principal concern, then, was competing with the cartel.

Albright: Yes. We were competing with the cartel. Of course, that continued until the Second World War broke out, and then they were cut off again. The Germans invaded France, took back the Alsatian lands, and had all their own, and of course the Russian potash couldn't get out and the Spanish potash had been all tied up in the Spanish civil war. ~~They~~ All Spanish plants were in bad shape, their plants were in bad shape and not producing much, so what little potash came from there, I suppose they used it themselves, or sold it around the Mediterranean. No potash got over here. We were ~~all~~ here in pretty good shape then. There were three of us going strong by the time the war broke out, and we greatly expanded our

plants, enormously expanded our plants as fast as we could.

Q: You say you vastly expanded when the war started?

Albright: Well, I wouldn't be able to give you what the tonnages amounted to, per day, but I would say that my recollection is that during the war we were producing, before the end of the war, upwards of 1600 tons of refined product a day. Since it took about three tons of ore to make a ton of refined product, we were bringing out of the mine upwards of five thousand tons a day. Of course, we're very much bigger than that now.

The company was one of the first to discover mineral potash in this country, and the first to put up a mine and refinery and put a product on the market. We used what is called a hot process. We take the ore and crush it, haul it to our refinery, and there dissolve it in huge dissolvers. We do that in a saturated solution of salt called a "mother liquor." Now, this potash ore that you see here is a combination, not a chemical compound but a combination, of minerals. It is a mixture of crystals of salt -- common salt -- and crystals of potash salt -- potassium salt -- mixed together. That's the way it was laid down in the old seas. And the job is to get the salt out of that mixture. The way we do it is to use this solution saturated with salt as a dissolving agent. It goes through this ore, and it'll only pick

up the potash, because it can't pick up any more salt. It's already full of salt. So it will leave the salt. That'll be flushed on out to a big old salt lake there where we deposit the waste. We've got millions of tons of good common salt out there that we can't do anything with, because that is a mineral that's too cheap to ship. We can't ship it any place on account of freight costs.

Q: Can't you use it for the next batch of hot water?

Albright: Well, there's just a little bit of it used for the hot water. We don't waste the water. This supersaturated salt solution picks up the potash when it's very hot. Then it's piped and pumped into vacuum coolers, and in the vacuum coolers the materials continue to surge in there and boil even when it becomes much cooler. Now, potash will drop out of a solution at a much lower temperature than the temperature at which it was taken in, whereas you can't get salt out that way. So the saturated liquor holding potash is cooled in these great coolers, and then it's pumped over to filters, and there the potash drops out, and the salt water goes on back to pick up more potash after being reheated. That saturated mother liquor, saturated with salt, is a carrier. We add more salt water to it from time to time. The other salt is wasted, that is the salt left behind as the potash is dissolved in the mother liquor. Of course, some potash is lost in the waste -- nearly ten per cent at times.

The filtered product is dried, right there on the filter it's dried completely. Then it's shipped, taken immediately to the railroad cars on belts, or it's taken to the warehouses. Operations are all on a very big scale. These plants are very large. We built our own railroad from the mine to the refinery, which is about 17 miles long.

Q: Is this the railroad you were speaking of earlier, that was struck?

Albright: Oh, no. That was the Santa Fe Railroad. All these mines are on the Santa Fe Railroad. We have two terminals there at the refinery. We have the terminal for our own railroad, which is a narrow gauge, that brings the ore in from the mine; and then we have a Santa Fe terminal, a broad gauge railroad, on the other side of the plant that takes out the finished product. We don't take potash out just by the carload, we take it out by the trainload. Almost every day in the season, there's a trainload of potash leaves our plant. The Santa Fe cars hold fifty tons; that is the rated capacity of them, but we were and I guess still are permitted to put 55 tons of potash in each car.

Q: Why this difference between the mine and the refinery?

Albright: That's on account of water. There's not much water at the mine. Furthermore, it's highly mineralized water.

We need water down there for our boilers, because we make our own electricity, ~~and -- no, we make our electricity with gas.~~ We fire the boilers with gas, but we have to have good water. We can't put poor water in the boilers. Then we want to have water that's fairly pure to mix with salt. We don't want to mix other minerals into this refining process, you see. We have to have lots of water. So, we're down near the Pecos River. We ~~we~~ bought old rec. rights water rights; we had to buy old water rights in order to protect ourselves, because of course that meant taking some land out of irrigation, ~~old old farm land water rights.~~

S: I recall reading in Moody's or some such place, early in '37 or '36, you had a certain amount of land owned outright, not leased; would that be water rights?

Albright: That's the way we had to buy in order to get the water rights. We also own the land upon which the refinery is located. We bought land there. We bought land where this deposit of waste is -- we bought all of that land, some of it we bought from the government and some from the ranchers there. We only own the surface of the Government land.

I want to say one thing more, in connection with those leases. I didn't point out that the state has a lot of land down there. ~~The way a state gets land is,~~ When a state is admitted to the Union, in ~~these western~~ public land states, by law they are made a grant, for school

purposes, of a certain amount of land. Now, usually, in most cases out there, the grant was two sections in a township, the 16th and 32nd sections of every township. There are 36 sections to a township, and the 16th and 32nd sections were deeded to some states for school purposes, and New Mexico is one which received four. Under other laws, the states have been able to consolidate those holdings by trades -- in other words, they don't have to keep their 16th and 32nd sections. But in the case of New Mexico, she got four sections to the township, I suppose because it was an arid state and also because it was a newer state. Anyway, some of the states down there, Arizona and New Mexico both, have four sections to the township. They have consolidated some of the holdings. Down in this potash field there were large areas of consolidated state lands, and we leased over 50,000 acres of those lands for exploration and for ores. Some of our mining has been on state lands. So we have to maintain relations with the state land department, as well as with the Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines and Bureau of Land Management in Washington.

Q: Are there any substantial differences in the attitudes or problems with the state?

Albright: No, except that the state has always demanded a 5% royalty. Its policy has been to seek higher royalty than the United States. But so far as inspection is concerned, the state

relies on the Geological Survey. I refer to inspection of the ore body, checking of extraction, etc. Both federal and state mine inspectors check safety devices and practices when both federal and state lands are being mined. But federal inspectors do not check mines in purely state lands. The Geological Survey has a mine inspector in Carlsbad, but he works other parts of the state from there.

Q: He enforces the federal...?

Albright: Well, he doesn't enforce laws, as a matter of fact. Nobody enforces them because we've never disobeyed them. But we'll just say he inspects. So we're inspected by both federal and state men to insure safety of men. But we're not under any state jurisdiction in any other way than that. I suppose the state could impose some rule or regulation on us, but I can't conceive of what it would be; that is over and above its mine safety code.

Q: Is potash mining a hazardous mining operation?

Albright: Well, no, I would say that potash is less hazardous than most mining. It depends on the way it's done, of course. We have to lay out our mine plan, and if one uses the room and pillar system and is very careful to see that the roof is checked

ll the time so there's no dropping of rocks, it's not hazard-
us at all. We never had anybody hurt in the mines until just
couple of years ago. That's when we started what we call re-
reat mining. If we mine by room and pillar system, we leave
he pillars, and then after we've mined out a section

of mine, we retreat, or rob the pillars, as we call it. In retreating we take out as much as the enginners feel can be taken out safely. When these pillers begin to crack and slough, why, then they pull out. I think a couple of years ago -- it was after my time, after I'd retired -- I think one man was killed in our mine. The only deaths we've had in all our operations -- we've got a very high record for a mining company -- we've been in connection with building the shaft. I think a man was killed in connection with building the shaft, and one, I remember, was killed one day due to the failure of his partner to give the right signal to the first man.

Two men were working in the shaft, doing some repair work in the shaft, and one of them had to go up to get some tools, and left the other man, his partner, working down there. He went up to get the tools, and when he started to go back down again, he gave the signal to go to the bottom, instead of giving the signal to go to where the work was going on, you see. The skip man has to operate by signals. So they just crashed the horse -- it's like an elevator, we call it the skip -- crashed it right through where all the work was going on, and killed the other man.

But there have been very, very few accidents in all these years in the potash mines. That kind of a mine is almost foolproof, so far as accidents are concerned.

Q: In other words, the problems are basically architectural. You don't have gases or anything like that.

Albright: No gases or anything like that. It's not like mining coal. You don't have those dangerous possibilities. However, we had two shafts, 2000 feet apart; that allows an escapeway. In case there ~~was~~ fire ~~on~~ one shaft, ~~you~~ could escape the other way. Both have ladders ~~you could~~ escape ~~through~~ if anything happened to the elevators. ~~Then, also, because of the air --~~ In order to ventilate a mine, of course you've got to pull air in from the outside, and that's done with enormous fans. These big fans pull the air down one shaft and out the other. That in itself is quite a technical job, to have this air circulated where the men are working. ~~For~~ We've got now hundreds of miles of tunnels in this mine, after thirty years. We don't keep them all filled with fresh air. ~~You~~ One can go in there and through those old tunnels without being hurt ~~much~~, but ~~you~~ one wouldn't want to stay in them very long. The air's not good. but it is not poisonous.

Q: How deep is the mine?

Albright: 1000 feet deep.

Q: That doesn't present any problems of heat particularly?

Albright: No, ~~it's~~ we have a uniform temperature all year round. A very comfortable place to work.

Q: Is there any danger of knocking through into gas pockets of any sort?

Albright: There is no gas. There's no gas in those mines. No, they're very safe properties. There's not much danger of anything happening to anybody. I've been through them dozens of times and have never seen anything that gave me the slightest apprehension.

Of course, we have lots of machinery down there. We've had ~~been~~ a very modern mine from the very beginning. We've kept right up with the modern equipment, various improved methods of mining we've adopted. For instance, today, in many ways using the word mine is using it in entirely different way from the way it would have been used a few years ago, because ~~you~~ we really don't have any miners. ~~When~~ We began mining, ~~like you do all mining, we began~~ late enough so that ~~you~~ we didn't have to use the old hand drills We had the jackhammers to drill the holes for the powder. The drill pattern would be laid out on the face of the mine. Then the drillers would come in, and drill with electric drills. Then they would be filled with dynamite and shot by experts. Then the ore would be gathered up in the cars. The tracks would have to be extended right up to the face of the mine, and the ore would be put in the cars by ~~the~~ first dragline, ~~by the first~~ dragline

haulage, that is with a

and scoops or shovels. Then came what was known as the Joy loader. The Joy loader was a machine invented by the Joy Manufacturing Company. It has great arms. The thing looks like a dinosaur. These great arms come out and gather the ore in, and push it back on a traveling belt. It goes back to a big rubber-tired wagon run by electricity, which then hauls this ore to the trains. With Joy loaders we do not run the trackage up to the face of the mine any more. There is the mainline tracks that run through, and these big trucks haul it out from the Joy loaders. We still use some Joy equipment.

But now comes what is known as the continuous miner, and that's a big machine that's moved on caterpillar tracks right up to the face of the mine ore body, and it claws down the ore onto a belt and takes it to these big machines, these trucks -- "shuttle buggies," we call them -- that take it away, move it out. There are no miners there at all. Just one man runs this machine. He just moves it into the ore, and the machine just claws it down.

Q: Have you had any trouble with labor as a result of mechanical appliances like this?

Albright: Automation? Automation trouble, we call it. No, we haven't.

Q: How does it happen that you haven't?

Albright: Well, it's come too gradually.

I didn't add all there is to this story. I didn't tell the whole process of mining potash -- same with coal, for potash is mined like coal. We first undercut the ore -- that is, we cut a slot about 9 inches thick, 8 or 9 feet wide, under the ore bodies, by the use of a machine with a chain of knives -- knives on a chain -- run by electricity, which digs underneath the body that you're going to shoot down. This is done at floor level. Now, the reason for that is, to cut that big slot underneath there is to make it possible to break the ore down without letting it fly off when it's detonated. Otherwise it would scatter out a great deal more and be much more expensive to gather up. But by undercutting it first, we save that expense.

So first the ore is undercut. Then it's drilled for shooting. Then it's shot, broken down, and then these various types of loaders that I've mentioned operate on it. We still have to use trains to get it to the foot of the shaft so it can be taken

Q: You take it up the shaft with a chain bucket system?

Albright: Oh, no, it's just taken up what we call the skip, a great traveling bin that is dropped down on cables, and it's automatically filled, then it is hoisted to the surface. They move very fast. The shaft's counterbalanced -- when one load is going up, the other skip is coming down.

Q: The men who work in the mine, on the machines, use the same skips for elevators when they come in or go up?

Albright: Oh, yes. The part of the skip for the men to travel on is on top of the skip that carries the ore. So you can ride right down on the same carriage.

Q: You had, I presume, basically an agricultural market.

Albright: Oh, yes, potash is basically an agricultural product.

Q: So you had seasons?

Albright: Yes. We usually are storing potash at this time of the year.

Q: In other words, you mine regularly and sell seasonally?

Albright: No, we sell all the year around, but the way we do it is, we raise the price -- we lower the price in the summer time, -- to move potash in the off season, the price is lowest. As the year advances we keep raising the price, a little higher. That makes the buyer do some of the storage himself. He saves money by buying and we save money by not storing, because storing costs money, besides, because we wouldn't be able to provide warehouses enough to store everything that we make in the course of a year, if we had to store our product even for six

months, we couldn't ~~store~~ do it. So by our pricing system, we ~~remove~~ large tonnage a good deal of the potash. Of course, we still store ~~it~~. By springtime we have quite an accumulation. It takes some time to get rid of it.

Q: I presume you wouldn't be able to meet the demand, in the busiest season, unless you had stored some, would you?

Albright: Well, that all depends upon how ~~we~~ customers take it. Now, during the war and immediately after the war, they were so anxious to get it that they took it as we made it. They almost fought for it. We didn't use our warehouses at all for several years, because ~~they~~ customers were so anxious to get it and fearful that they couldn't get it that they took it as they could. Now, with so much potash available, they're more inclined to let us store some. They don't buy it the way they used to, not in the same amounts. But still, a good deal of them take advantage of the pricing system.

Now, the old system we had, before the war, when we had the competition with the cartel, we had a pricing system where we sold potash at a 12% discount, ~~if~~ provided customers would ~~you'd~~ take ~~your~~ potash in equal monthly installments throughout the year. Of course, if ~~you only had~~ one ordered for a years supply one carload or two or three carloads, ~~you~~ we could dicker a little bit as to when ~~you'd~~ the buyer could take it, because we don't want to ship in less than a carload. As a matter of fact, we've always shipped a rather heavy car; I think our average is around

55 tons, as we can get that much potash in a 50 ton car, so that's what we use for shipping, about 55 tons. We can ship 40 ton cars. We don't ship anything less than 40 tons.

Q: When you came into the business, was this discount practice already extant?

Albright: Oh yes, we adopted it from the German-French group. They had the same practice.

Q: When you came in, what techniques did you use to find a market?

Albright: We knew where the market was. We knew the fertilizer buyers and manufacturers. ~~We had associations,~~ There was the National Fertilizer Association. We hired as sales manager a man who had been in the business for a long time and knew everybody.

Q: In the fertilizer business?

Albright: No, no, he'd been in the potash business. He'd been working for American Potash and Chemical, and he knew everybody in the business. Then, of course, as soon as I got in the business, I went around, getting acquainted. We had these conventions, at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, every year, where we met all the users of potash, the important ones, anyway. Of course, maybe some of the little

fellows didn't get there. But we paid attention to them too. We had lots of little people, the cooperatives, agricultural cooperatives, all kinds of people, and then also we developed a good business with industry. Of course, there's only about 5% to 10% of our potash goes to industry, making potash chemicals.

Now, for instance, in making television tubes -- there's a great deal of potassium carbonate used. Now, much of the glass for TV tubes is made at Niagara Falls. We sell to the people who make potassium carbonate and many other chemicals of a more specialized kind that require special equipment.

Q: That's comparatively a very small part.

Albright: That's only about 5% of our potash output. We don't sell much more than that to chemical industries. Of course, potash during the war was an interesting feature of our business. We haven't discussed potash in war at all. There are lots of things having to do with war related to potash.

For instance, one of the first things that happened to us was, because we made in our plant the whitest, the purest first-run potash in the world -- our plant was so complete, so new and so efficient that we made almost pure potassium chloride. Pure potassium chloride I think is 63.17% K_2O -- potassium oxide. The rest of it is chloride. But that's as pure as you can get, with potassium chloride. We were making about a 62.5%, whereas none

of our competitors could make much over 60%, or were even reaching 60, and the same way with the foreigners. So, for chemicals they either would have to re-refine the potash in order to use it or else they'd have to buy the best they could. Well, nowadays the chemical manufacturers demand 99.9% pure potassium chloride -- KCl. We're rebuilding our plant down there to be sure we get 99.9%. But in wartime, our material was so good that the chemical industries were very happy to get it, and they could make good use of it.

Soon after we got into the war, I was summoned to Washington, and I was told this, by the War Production Board, just as it began operations: "Mr. Albright, we're going to expect you to supply the chemical industry with its chemical grade potash for chemicals."

I said, "We are supplying it with some, but if we tried to supply all of them we'd have to cut down our commitments to our fertilizer customers. That would be pretty disastrous for us. We have to live after the war. Why make us do it?"

"Well, because you're making most of the only grade the chemical industry can use. American Potash and Chemical Company is making some, but you're going to be expected to take care of the bulk of this business, and you can either agree to do it, have a voluntary understanding here that you will do it and we can rely on you to do it, or else we'll have to issue a directive."

I pleaded with them to consider what our situation was.

We'd have to scale down our customers, I've forgotten how much it was, because there was a great deal more potash used in industry

during the war.

But they could see no other way out of the situation, so they put it up to me as requested. to decide what I'd do and I said I'd do it. So we didn't get any directive. But we took care of practically all the potash used during the war in the making of chemicals containing potassium.

Q: Was there no possibility of your getting together with the other manufacturers?

Albright: The other people couldn't make it. The other potash companies couldn't make it.

Q: I know it, but since you were the one who was being forced to give up your regular customers, couldn't you set up an association or something so that they would be servicing your customers in your name?

Albright: Oh, well, they wouldn't agree to that. They were out to get all they could get out of it, and I suppose anyway they would have said the anti-trust laws wouldn't allow that.

In a way, what happened here with the Pennsylvania Railroad recently, that's other railroads were helping the Pennsylvania here in the strike. I don't know under just what conditions they can do that. Railroads can do things that other

industries can't do, because of the controls of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Then, during the war, we had many committees. One of the most important was the Fertilizer Committee of the Department of Agriculture. It was set up by the Secretary of Agriculture before the war, before we got in the war. I don't know whether it was 1940 or the early part of '41. I was asked to be the potash representative on that committee. It was made up of about 15 men, representing big fertilizer manufacturers and small manufacturers, some of from the Middlewest and Northeast and the Southeast, in other words, different sections of the country, and then there were industry representatives, two from the nitrogen industry, one from the phosphate industry, and myself for the potash industry. And it was very interesting to me. We not only helped the Department of Agriculture work out plans for handling potash and other fertilizer materials, and distributing them, during the war, during the emergency, but the Food Administration, when it was set up -- we became advisory to it, on various phases of soil care and increasing production. Then the War Production Board used us, ~~the committee~~, so we were really a committee for three war outfits, that committee was.

~~That was~~ The Fertilizer Committee, and that committee was a very important one continued up until 1947. I think its last meeting was 1947, because I remember that Charles ~~know the t Sec~~ Brannan was Secretary of Agriculture.

That must have been in Truman's time, because . . .

Q: I th'nk Claude Wickard stayed through Roosevelt's administration, didn't he?

Albright: ~~Anderson~~ Brannan ~~went out in '48?~~ became Secretary of Agriculture in '48. ~~Brannan~~ Clinton Anderson, new U.S. Senator, succeeded Wickard. It must have been Wickard was still there when we finished up with our Fertilizer Committee. Then we had a Potash Committee of the War Industry Board. We went down there and discussed our productive capacity, and our plans for expanding it and increasing it, and also what our needs were, in the way of materials and supplies to keep our plants running. We discussed such problems as protection of the plants. Now, J. Edgar Hoover took the position that because we were in the potash business, we were vulnerable to espionage, and he sent men down there, sent his experts down there to study the plans and put in a very strict, I won't say costly, system of controls and protection of the plants from any possible espionage. Had made certain the

Q: Just because the supply was so restricted?

Albright: Yes. It was so important to have potash. In the second place, it might ~~be~~ have been an industry that the Germans would like to destroy.

An interesting thing grew out of that. ~~They~~ Our Government established a big prisoner of war camp down ~~there~~ in New Mexico not far from Carlsbad, and we were summoned to Washington one day and asked if we wouldn't employ prisoners of war in our mine -- just exactly the opposite from what J. Edgar Hoover thought we ought to do. Shows you how one agency doesn't know what the other's doing, don't you see. We had to say, "Well, you'll have to take that up with Mr. J. Edgar Hoover. We don't want to employ these POW's, but if you think we must, you talk it over with him." Of course, we never had any intention of employing them, and we didn't. ~~But they put them down there~~ Some Government agency, but the prisoners because ~~there was~~ we're so much desert all around them, there wasn't much chance of their running away.

Then we had a Potash Industry Committee for the Office of Price Administration, in which we had to meet and discuss our price structure with the price administrators -- ~~Chester Bowles and~~ Leon Henderson first, then Chester Bowles, then Michael Disalle, because the whole thing was picked up again during the Korean War. When the Korean War came on, we found ourselves under controls again, although this time it was pretty much a voluntary control. Of course, our whole product was put under allocation during the war. ~~They had a man down there.~~

Q: During Korea, you mean.

Albright: No, During World War II; potash it was all put under allocation.

Q: Incidentally, we haven't said it specifically, but the point on potash inwar is its munitions use, isn't it?

Albright: Oh, no, it hasn't anything to do with munitions. In the old days, back in the Civil War and the Spanish American war, I suppose, potassium was a very important ingredient of black powder, but it has nothing to do with present munitions.

Q: Then what is the wartime need for it in industry?

Albright: In all kinds of chemicals. ~~Various kinds.~~ Just miscellaneous things, all kinds of things. I think that some potash was used in missiles. I think it is now, too. ~~But there were certain phases of war activities, but not the~~ but not the great explosives, as it used to be. In the old days, in the old black powder days, potash was very important.

Horace M. Albright - 21 October 1960 - by William Ingersoll.

Q: When you started in the potash company, you immediately found yourself confronted with a price war. I get conflicting stories as to just what the cause of that was. Was that Spanish troubles, Russian troubles, or just what?

Mr. Albright: Well, I think it must be traced to ~~Russian~~ Spanish troubles. ~~The -- I mean Spanish troubles.~~ The cartel, as I remember it at that time, was made up of only French and German producers. The agreement between them was that, in the export business, the Germans would have 70% of the business and the French would have 30%. The Spanish developed their mines, around 1930-33, and they got in a position where they had some ~~potash~~ potash to export and wanted to do it, and of course the French and German cartel was in their way. So they decided to sell anyway, and they reduced the price to extraordinarily low levels here in the United States. So the fight was on over here, precipitated by the Spanish, the object being to force the cartel to admit the Spanish producers to the organization and give them a share in the export market. The price dropped to extremely low levels that have never been known before or since. We went down to --the figures wouldn't mean muchto you -- but it was 27¢ a unit of potash, delivered at the Atlantic and Gulf ports, which meant that it was 27¢ for every 20 pounds of pure

potash (K_2O - potassium oxide). We would have to deliver the material, pay the freight, to the ports. That year we lost money -- we American producers; there were only two of us, that particular year. Then another year there was another producer.

But the Spanish were admitted to the cartel, and given 4 % of the foreign market.

Q: Was it just that small interest in the thing that precipitated the price war?

Albright: It was a small interest, but they managed to get 4%, because of their ability to disarrange markets, you see.

About the same time, or very shortly afterwards, I think within a year or two, the Russians began to send over some potash, not only here but to other markets of the cartel, probably the Low Countries and Scandinavian countries. The arrangement there was to give the Russians a small quota. As I remember it -- and I could be wrong about this -- I think the German-French cartel bought the potash and paid the Russians for the potash, without taking it -- just let them keep their potash but paid them the profit that they would have made had they shipped the potash, and told them to use it in their own country. So I don't know what the percentage amounted to; it probably wasn't more than 1 or 2 percent.

Q: What was the advantage to the cartel in doing that?

Albright: Well, they'd have them as part of the organization, and they would no longer be free to ship indiscriminately to any place they wanted to. If they had any potash to sell, they had to take it up with the cartel, because they were members of the cartel.

Q: The Russians actually used most of their own potash?

Albright: Yes. They did. And they probably still do, and they should. They're supposed to produce about 1,100,000 tons of K_2O which is the way you measure potash -- K_2O, that means potassium oxide -- and they could use several million tons in their own country, according to the reports that we receive. 7 millions, I think is the estimate. And it's probably so, considering the great size of the country and the fact that they haven't used it heretofore, and some of their regions are very old, have been cultivated for centuries without replacing the minerals in the soil. Suppose it was only 2 or 3 millions, they'd still use far more potash than they are producing.

Q: So they would have to import in any case.

Albright: Well, they should import. Whether they're doing it or not, we don't know. But they probably are getting some from

East Germany. East Germany is a large producer of potash, and East Germany is probably shipping potash to all the satellites and to Russia. It's also shipping some to the Western countries.

Q: What is Spain's consumption of potash? does she use a great deal herself?

Albright: No, she uses very little, and the reason why she uses very little is because they needed foreign credits and potash was an exportable product, so they foolishly (as we see it) exported potash when they should have been using it on their own worn-out soils. It would have been much better for the country. But they chose to export it, and they still do. They're using much more on their soils; as they increase their production, they're using more on their soils, but they're still exporting most of it. They probably could use every bit that they make, but they just don't do it.

Q: What did you do about the price war? Was there anything you could do?

Albright: We couldn't do anything that year, except meet the lower Spanish prices in order to hold our business. We did hold our business, but we lost money.

But the next year, the cartel having gotten itself stabilized

and gotten the Spanish and probably the Russians into the arrangements, whatever they were, they raised the price back to a remunerative ~~price~~ level, and of course we met that price too and we made a little money. Not much. But gradually the price crept back up again to where it was, in 1933. This price war took place in 1934. By about 1936, why, we were fairly well back to where we were in 1933, and we were making some money. That was the first year that our company was ever able to pay a dividend. It paid a small dividend in 1936.

Q: Did you make any corporate changes around that time? The reason I ask is that I notice that, in Moody's, US Potash is first listed in '37. I was wondering if there was any specific reason for that, had anything transpired that brought that about, or was it just that they got around to it at that time?

Albright: I would say that our company's operations were pretty private and certainly out of the news until 1937. We were first incorporated, I think, in 1926. Then we completed our exploration work in 1929, and began the building of our mine, and we first began to produce ore in January, 1931. The first year, 1931, we sold only what we call manure salts, that is, the raw ore, which is a good fertilizer, but expensive fertilizer in the sense that it costs ~~more~~ so much to ship it to Eastern markets than we got out of it as material. In other words, the freight was as much as, or more than, the material itself was worth.

We got our refinery finished in September, 1932, and we were then in the business ~~of refining~~ of shipping refined ~~muriated potash~~ muriate of potash (potassium chloride), which is what the trade wanted, and still we were being financed through our own resources. But in 1936, we issued a 6% preferred stock, — We got that out about December, 1936, because I remember that while we were working on the registration statement in Los Angeles, (the company that handled the distribution of that stock was W.E. Steaps of San Fransisco and Los Angeles), and we broke off our work one afternoon to hear the King of England abdicate and tell why he was going to leave the position of King to marry Mrs. Simpson, Wally Simpson. ~~Therefore,~~ Of course, we had to file a registration statement with the Securities Exchange Commission, and that was when we first made public our corporate organization and our financial structure. That would naturally be picked up by Moody's the next year, so that is why a person would first hear about it then. But ~~it~~ we it hadn't made any change, really, in our set-up, except that we did have a 6% preferred stock issued on the market, which was readily sold to investors.

Q: That was the occasion for your turning in your five year contract.

Albright: That's when I turned in my five year contract, because I didn't want it published. I didn't see any reason why it should be published, not because of anything inherently wrong with the contract, but it did indicate that I was apprehensive

that the company wouldn't survive, or that I wouldn't be able to manage it, one or the other of those things. Well, by then I had been then the executive head of the company for nearly four years, and I knew I could manage it, and the other point was that we had been successful. We were a successful company, and making money, and we had declared our first dividend, and we were doing all right, so that there was no point particularly to having the contract. And I didn't care to have it published, because it had these provisions in it, that the company would have to look after me, and also it had reference to my salary and to conditions of my employment which I didn't feel that everybody ought to have to talk about. So I just canceled the contract, and that being so, I didn't have to have it put in the registration papers.

Q: How did things work out with SEC? They were on the scene at that time.

Albright: Yes, SEC was in the scene. Well, our operations were so clean and clear that there was no difficulty about registering the stock. We readily got their permission to put the stock on the market, ~~and got to file a registration certificate,~~ filed a prospectus, and with that andtheir approval, we immediately disposed of the stock through the Stearns Co. in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Q: It was a public sale.

Albright: It was a public sale. It was advertised as a public sale. I think it was pretty well taken up by relatively few purchasers, because much of it was taken in large blocks. I don't remember now how many stockholders we had, but we didn't have an awful lot of them. It wasn't a very big stock issue, as a mater of fact.

Q: Your first two principals, Snowden McSweeney and Pacific Borax, how did they feel about this price war? Gee, you just get set up and your refinery is going, and the heart gets cut out of your prices. Did they figure that was just the breaks of the game and they should hang on, or how did they feel about it?

Albright: Well, they were a naturally courageous group, anyway. They were old time producers of oil and borax. They'd been throught difficulties before. They were very knowledgeable people; they knew economics in both oil and potash, and they knew that industries do have these ups and downs. But they were also sure that the cartel couldn't afford to sell at these ridiculously low prices, and that they'd have to come back sooner or later; it wouldn't be more than a year or two of it, so our people were prepared to hang on, even if it cost them a lot of money. Fortunately it didn't cost us so very much. But they were familiar enough with

the way things went, the markets and all that, so they didn't worry about it. Furthermore, ~~they~~ our people had the feeling that if they pressed us too hard, in view of the sufferings that we'd had during the First World War and the enormous costs that were involved in not being able to get potash during the First World War, that our government would find a way to protect us. In other words, if this price war continued very long, there might be a tariff imposed, or some other steps might be taken, authorizing only quotas, so that we'd be given an opportunity to market our product-- if it continued long enough to threaten bankruptcy, or serious losses, where we'd lose our property.

Now, that, I think, had a good deal to do with the restoration of the price. I think that over on the other side, among the foreigners, they were just as much afraid of government action over here as they could be.

Q: The cartel was already operating under a consent decree from the anti-trust people?

Albright: Yes. They'd been in trouble before. They were then in the Department of Justice, and they were under some sort of a decree. I don't remember the details of that now.

Q: What was the effect of the cartel's price? I presume it was

adequate to allow you to make money? Inasmuch as they had a monopoly, they didn't put the price way down so they were just breaking even, or anything like that.

Albright: No. The price that was in effect when we went into business was a fair price. Of course, potash ~~this~~ was a cheap material anyway. Certainly no consumer of potash could quarrel about the price. It was not a high price. It never has been a high price. It's not a high price now.

But, as I said before, I think that the cartel realized that our government was so insistent that something be done about potash production in this country, lest we be left without potash in the case of another war, that they would have been reluctant to put us out of business, even if they could. If they were in a position to put the price at so low a level that we could not compete and therefore put us out of business, they would immediately have been confronted with some sort of laws or policies down in Washington that would have restricted their importation, and also would have brought them very bad publicity. So ~~they~~ the best thing for them was to just act normally. They just went ahead with a price that was fair and we, of course, couldn't go above it. We couldn't sell our potash if we went above it, so we sold it at the current going price.

Q: Once the price war was out of the way, there was

no temptation on your part to go seeking a protective tariff or anything like that?

Albright: No, because we knew that we were handicapped by a couple of very important items. One was that the farmer was involved, and any effort on our part to get ourselves some sort of a monopoly position here, through a tariff under which farmers ~~they~~ would have to buy our material, if foreign material or other competitive material could be kept out, would not be likely to be passed by Congress. The other feature was that we had demonstrated already that we could compete with the Germans in this country if we had a price that was realistic at all. We never did ask for any protection at any time. So far as I know, we never have, in respect to potash.

Q: You never wanted it, or never needed it?

Albright: Well, even if there were times when we wanted it, we were sensible enough to know we couldn't get it. So we've always been faced with a competitive prospect, except during the war itself. When the war was on, of course, we were then hard put to meet the demands for potash. We didn't have to think about competition; the thing to do was to thinkabout getting enough material to supply the demands ofour own market. And, of course, we

also had to export some during the war to England, and to some other members of the Commonwealth, because they couldn't get it.

Q: How about the thirties? Did you engage in any export business at all at that time?

Albright: Well, only in 1934-35, those years that the potash was in the throes of this price war. We did export to Czechoslovakia. It was not a great tonnage, but it was something to throw a real scare into the Germans. If we were able to ship potash from Carlsbad, New Mexico, clear across this country to the Atlantic ports, and then by ship to the mouth of the Elbe and up the Elbe River into Czechoslovakia to the Skoda works, why, we must be able to produce potash pretty reasonably, pretty cheaply. Some 3500 or 4000 tons that we had shipped through a chemical broker in Vienna did, I think, profoundly disturb the European producers. We did that because we had the surplus, and because we wanted to show that we could do this sort of thing if we had to, and we did get more for that potash, a good deal more than we were getting ~~for~~ in sales here, because ~~they~~ the cartel didn't reduce the price of potash in Europe.

Q: You were cutting their throats there.

Albright: Exactly.

Q: Whose idea was it?

Albr'ght: Well, I think it was our own idea. But it just so happens that this man -- ~~I've forgotten his name now~~ Anton Lindner, he's dead -- who was a worldwide chemical broker brought to our attention the possibilities of shipping potash to the Czechs and other countries. We decided that we'd see what we could do with it. And he gave us a price that was remunerative, and so we shipped through him to Czechoslovakia.

Q: The solution of the price war was something that had to be taken care of purely between the cartel and the Spanish or Russians?

Albright: Under our antitrust laws, there was nothing we could do. We couldn't talk to them under any circumstances. It was something ~~you~~ we had to keep away from as far as ~~you~~ we possibly could. ~~You~~ We were helpless, as far as doing anything about the price was concerned. The only thing ~~you~~ we could do was meet it and dispose of your product, or else close up your plants. So, as I say, we met the price, although it ~~was~~ meant a net loss to us, but we stayed in business, we didn't give up, and it came out all right in the long run. We couldn't possibly have had any association with ~~them~~ our competitors or discuss any matters at all.

Q: Did the Spanish Civil War have any effect upon the Spanish action?

Albright: Yes, it did. It certainly did. The potash production was ~~That country was~~ in the middle of the Spanish war. There were potash producers ~~involved~~ in Catalonia, up above Barcelona, and there was a great deal of the war fought around there. It did effect them. Their production was very poor during those years, 1936-37, around there. ~~Very bad.~~ They didn't really get back into the field again before the World War came on. They were still in the throes of trying to get re-established.

Q: Now, the cartel hung on until '39, I gather, when Germany and France were at war.

Albright: Yes, the cartel hung on , I guess, until Germany invaded France and took over the French potash fields. And then that gave the Germans control of all the potash that was available, except in Spain and in America. But until they actually invaded France, both German and French potash got in here. That is, in 1939 and '40, there were some exports from both Germany and France. I don't know just how German potash got in here, whether it came around through the blockade or whether it came through to Antwerp or some port like that, but the French of course were still able to ship until they were overrun in the spring of 1940. From 1940 to 1945, there were no exports from France and Germany. For those five years, we Americans had to take care of our own market, and also had to do a certain amount of shipping.

Now, in 1938 we organized the Potash Export Association,

under that special law authorizing American concerns to form an export association and to engage in business abroad. In that association, under the law, it's possible for competing producers who are in the association to agree on prices for foreign sales. And even to engage in dealings with foreign companies; even to engage in business with your competitors abroad.

Q: In other words, a suspension of the antitrust laws concerning foreign trade.

Albright: Yes, you could say a suspension of it, or it's outside the ~~laws~~ provisions of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act.

We organized that association in 1938, and we had some exportable surplus during that year, largely due to the fact that there was so much potash imported, and we exported some potash to England. But it had to go to Belgium first, to be converted into sulphate of potash. They had to take our muriate of potash -- that is, potassium chloride -- and convert it into potassium sulphate, to go to England, so that we didn't make very much money on that potash that we shipped abroad. We made some, enough to pay our transportation expenses and conversion expenses, and expenses of the ~~institute~~ export association. We did make some money on it. But we hadn't completed all our shipments when the war began -- when we were in the midst of the war. So we suspended the Export Association, we put it on ice. We let our director, our

secretary, go, and we boxed up the files, and put them away. We put the Association aside for the time being.

Then we had a very remarkable thing happen. In 1941, after we'd completed all this job of closing up the Export Association, our government -- I won't say for sure which department it was, but I think it was the State Department -- took the position that we ought to make some potash available to Japan. We objected to that, because we had a market here for everything we could make, and we did not want to ship any potash abroad at all. We didn't want to engage in export business. Our export association had already been suspended, and so we objected to any shipments. But they called us to Washington and said they were going to embargo potash to all countries, including Japan, except that they would not embargo the raw salts -- that is, the ore, what we called manure salts, which we could ship. And furthermore, they said we ought to ship this material to them so that they wouldn't be completely deprived of potash, because they couldn't get potash any place else, they'd have to get it over here.

Well, we pointed out that unless they embargoed our customers, an embargo placed on producers like we were would not accomplish their objective -- that is, that our customers would be able to export potash.

Q: You mean the fertilizer manufacturers?

Albright: Yes. Fertilizer manufacturers. They'd be able to export potash that we sold them, unless they were included in the embargo regulations. But for some reason or other, they didn't see fit to extend the embargo orders further than to the producers, and the result was that a lot of potash went out of the country in 1941 and '42, at high prices, making very considerable profits to our customers, ~~but we bring~~ while we were deprived of the opportunity to sell. On the other hand, we had to sell raw ore to Japan.

So we went back and re-established our Export Association, for the export of manure salts, that is, the raw salts to Japan, and we shipped several shiploads during 1941. The last one went to one of the Pacific Coast ports just before Pearl Harbor.

O: Did it arrive?

Albright: I don't know whether it arrived or not, but we got our pay. But we were very suspicious of the Japanese, probably much more suspicious of the Japanese than our government was, because we refused to sell any material that year except with prepayment. In other words, before we let a carload of potash go ahead to the Pacific Coast to be exported to Japan, we were paid for it.

O: Well, the Japanese probably would have liked that anyway. Their assets were frozen here, they couldn't export their money, but I suppose they could pay you.

Albright: I don't think they were frozen in 1941. I think they were frozen after Pearl Harbor.

Q: They were frozen in June. Freezing the assets was one of the things that Moore and Pahusa wanted to --

Albright: Well, then, we were getting our money. At any rate, we had no difficulty getting our money, ~~and we shipped~~ -- What happened was, I think we demanded ~~one half payment~~, payment for one half the value of the shipment, upon placing the order, and the other half had to be paid when the shipment was ready to leave Carlsbad. So before it ever went on board the ship to Japan, we had all our money. That went onin 1941 -- of course, I say, over our objections, for two reasons. In the first place,we had a market for all the material we could produce. We didn't want to ship anything abroad, didn't have to. And in the second place, anything we did ship we were depriving ofir American customers of the opportunity to buy.

Q: How did the State Department compel you to ship?

Albright: Well, you don't ask those questions when the government wants you to dosomething. You don't say, "Well, how are you going to compel us?" They probably had ways to do it. We didn't

go into that. They were expecting us to ship it. They told us to.

Q: What was the purpose of the State Department's wanting you to ship potash to Japan?

Albright: It was international public relations. It was the same thing that prompted ~~them~~ Washington officials to encourage the shipment of scrap iron that year.

Q: It seems so incongruous.

Albright: Well, they encouraged a lot of shipments in 1941, and one of the worst ones was scrap iron, because that gave Japan the chance to build up her steel output. ~~A lot of that was shipped that year,~~ there were vast quantities of steel shipped in 1941. I think there were other chemicals and other materials that were shipped during the year, with the encouragement of the State Department.

Q: When the e State Department requests came through to you, did you get orders through the normal commercial channels? Or did you also get the orders for the shipment via State Department?

Albright: No. Both American Potash & Chemical and ourselves had been shipping to certain private enterprises in Japan. American Potash and Chemical was shipping to the cartel agency in Japan, I don't recall what the name of it was -- I had I think it was the Nippon Import Co.

the raw ore than they would have -- under these conditions of war-- than they would if they'd gotten the refined product. But we didn't succeed in convincing them on any of those points: On the point of the importance of manure salts to them, or the dangers of not putting an embargo on our customers. Our customers I suppose sold some potash to Japan too, but they certainly sold it to many other countries.

Q: You weren't in effect conserving our potash at all.

Albright: No. You see, a customer couldn't buy from us, in Carlsbad, and tell us to ship the potash to the Pacific Coast, to be shipped on to Japan, because we'd naturally say: "Well, if you're going to ship this to Japan, we'll ship it ourselves. We've got our own customers in Japan," don't you see. So our customers, buying from us, with the idea of shipping abroad at a profit, substantial profit, would have to take it to their own plants first, or at least have it shipped to their ports, and most of the exporting was done by customers whose plants were along the ports, like Norfolk and Savannah and Jacksonville and other places. Potash would be shipped to them, and then they would move it on from there, but it wouldn't go to Japan. It would go to Bermuda and Cuba and South America, Brazil, possibly even to South Africa; it would go to places like that.

Q: Earlier, in '38, when you set up the Potash Export Association,

Now, that Japanese potash was not exported through the Potash Export Association.

Q: It had never been?

Albright: No. We'd had those customers before the Export Association went into effect. So the Japanese market was excluded from the ~~purview~~ field of operations of the PotashExport Association. That's not the truth now. The Export Association today exports to Japan as well as to other countries.

Q: What was theDepartment's purpose in having you send manure salts out there, instead of refining it?

Albright: Well, their idea there was to make it as expensive as possible for them, saving the good material forour country, and if they had to have potash, let them make it themselves, let them refine it themselves. Now, we pointed out to them that that was a bad idea, because they got two products out of it, if they used the salt. They not only got the refined potash but they got the salt. Japan is short on salt; just common ordinary table salt they ~~got~~ would get our raw ore out of ~~this~~, because ~~all the waste,~~ they'd use up every particle of the waste out of this potash ore. It's just garbage here, but over there it's a very valuable and saleable product. We pointed out that they were getting much more benefit out of just

or something, Nippon Potash Importer, some kind of name like that, a translation of a Japanese name. And we had been shipping to Suzuki and Co., which was a big chemical company, also engaged in ~~making electric power,~~ producing electric power. We were the only two companies that were shipping to Japan, and while American Potash and Chemical was shipping refined material, we were shipping raw salts more than we were muriate of potash, the refined potash. So we -- under the State Department mandate, or direction, we, as I recall it, shipped to another agency that they designated, that year, which received the Japanese potash shipments. I don't think either of us shipped to the people we'd been shipping to. We had cut them off the year before, when we were faced with the problem of taking care of ~~our own~~ all potash bus'ness here. We had canceled our contracts.

Q: How do you cancel a contractlike that? Do you simply say that you can't fill it, or do you give any reason?

Albright: It was a contract that was to be renewed year by year unless canceled, unless ~~you~~ we ~~gave~~ notice that ~~you~~ we not continue to export couldn't do it. My recollection is now that, being faced with the necessity of supplying the American market after 1939 when the war broke out, we just simply notified our Japanese customers that we couldn't ship to them, so that by 1940 I don't suppose they got very much potash. As far as I remember it now, they didn't get any from us.

you had legislation that authorized you to do it, but why did you want to do it, instead of each functioning on his own?

Albright: Well, it was bad enough to compete between ourselves and with the foreigners, but this offered an opportunity to avoid cutting each other's throats abroad. The Export Association enables you to consolidate your orders and get a better price. These orders would come in in such a way that one company couldn't fill them either. Suppose somebody in Brazil, for instance, or Bermuda, wanted 10,000 tons, and our company, or American Potash & Chemical, couldn't take 10,000 tons alone; it took the two of us to supply it. Among us we could meet almost any kind of an order that would come in, but singly we couldn't do it. So operating singly would only tend to divert orders over to the foreigners.

The way these export associations operate is that the manager calls upon the constituent members and says that he has an order for so much potash, and gives the grade wanted, and then offers us a chance to bid; he says that according to our production capacities we are entitled to so much tonnage -- say there are three in the organization, or four -- we are entitled to a certain percentage. Now, how much of that do you want? You might not be able to take any of it; then you'd say you didn't want any of it. Then the remaining members would have a chance to take more, if they want it. And sometimes it reaches a point

where we can't take any of it, because we're booked up in this country -- can't take any of it; and in that event, the Potash Export Association has to decline the offer. Then the buyer goes to somebody else.

Q: I see. You don't commit yourself beforehand to provide the Export Association with so many tons.

Albright: Well, we try to. We make up a budget on what we think we can do, and we really put a certain amount in the pool. So for next year we'll figure, we have about so much to export. The next company says it'll have so much to export. That, in a way, sort of creates the percentage. It doesn't necessarily have to relate to your capacity or the fact that you have a certain percentage of interest in the Association. The division sometimes ends up with you having the percentage that you say you can put in the pool. That's the way it's spread out, in the actual distribution. However, if all members of the Association are eager to export all they are entitled to on a basis of capacity for production, then the production ratio would govern.

Q: I assume that with such a small number of producers, there was no trick to setting up an export association. You just felt you had to get together.

Albright: There were only three of us at first -- that was in 1938, there were only three of us -- and there weren't any more than that until after the war. Because the fourth one that came in was

International Minerals and Chemicals. They came in just in time to supply the trade during the war. So when the war was over, and the Association meant something to us again, then International joined, as did Bonneville, Ltd. and ~~that~~ one out in Utah ~~get another way, Bonneville.~~ So there was a time when we had five or six members.

I don't know how many members they have now. I know we're still a member. But they come and go. Sometimes they get tired, "we'd rather ship by ourselves," then they want to withdraw, and they go out, and come back, sometimes ~~they stay~~ five stayed out. But I think there must be five or six members of ~~it~~ the Export Association today. There never are very many members, because there are not many producers.

Q: I presume, in '38, one of the considerations for setting up the Export Association was that you were competing with the cartel, and it was a case of fighting fire with fire.

Albright: Yes, we were competing with the cartel, and they were on notice that we were going to ship wherever we could, that we had surpluses. It was a question of surplus. Now, that had two effects, I suppose, on the cartel. I have no way of knowing what the cartel thought, but I would assume that they thought: well, if they can ship over into our markets, into Europe, and ship into any country except a producing country -- those producing countries over there in those days had tariffs, so you couldn't ship into Germany or France or Spain, they'd keep out raw

materials, but you could ship into all the other countries. And the other thing about it is, they could ship into the world markets, like Brazil and Japan and other places. So that therefore, they had this organization to fear, and that, I think, prompted them to buy our potash when we determined in 1938 to sell in Europe. In other words, that year we had a surplus to sell, they came and bought it themselves.

Q: The cartel did?

Albright: The cartel bought it themselves. At least -- not directly, but through one of their subsidiaries. The subsidiary placed an order for the material that we were advertising as available. They put in a bid for it, and we sold it to them, and we had a right to do that, under the law.

Q: In '34, Ickes called a halt to prospecting in New Mexico, because he didn't want the industry overdeveloped. And in '35 -- in '34 he called a halt for 90 days, which he repeated three or four times, and in '35 he stopped it altogether for an indefinite period. How did the government feel in '38 when you were exporting?

Albright: Well, we exported so little I don't know if the government even knew about it. No reason particularly why they

should.

We didn't have to report to anybody in the Interior Department on that score. We reported to the Department of Commerce, the division that handles and looks after the export associations. There was a very intelligent woman in charge of it at the time -- her name was Miss Love. I doubt very much whether any important reports were made. It was a relatively small amount, and I don't see how it would have affect T. Mr. Ickes' order.

His order, incidentally, came out of his own operations. We knew nothing about that. Of course, we were pleased that he did it, because there was very great danger of too many people getting into this business. When he finally discarded the order, in November 194[illegible], just before the end of the war, he did it without giving any notice to us, and the first thing we knew there were all kinds of applications for permits to explore, particularly in New Mexico around where we were. There was no other potash field of any importance in the country at the time.

Q: What was the action of the state of New Mexico? Did they permit exploration on their lands?

Albright: Yes. New Mexico never closed exploration on state lands, but those state lands were so widely separated, and there was little more than a square mile in any one place. It was all

surrounded by public domain.

Q: So Ickes decision -- ?

Albright: His decision really governed the thing, because nobody would go out and just file on a state section and try to explore it, when, if he had discovered potash, all the land around it would be subject to permits from the federal government.

Q: Then the requests that were coming in for permission to explore, in '34 and '35, were not coming from you but were coming from other people who wanted to compete with you?

Albright: Oh, yes, there were all kinds of people filing for ~~permission,~~ for prospective permits. Most of them had no intention whatever of exploring, let alonex producing, because if they could file and get a permit, then they could turn that permit over to a producer and get a royalty. That's what the bulk of the permittees did. They'd get a permit, and then they'd get a producer like ourselves to take the permit, and pay them a royalty.

We had one case -- I won't mention any names -- but after we had started to drill a certain area down there, or were ready to drill -- I don't remember just how far along we were, it was just before I came into the company -- ~~we~~ our office here in New York telegraphed to the company's land agent to go to

Las Cruzes, New Mexico, land office, and file on certain lands, told them where the lands were located, the lands we intended to prospect by drilling. Well, there was a telegraph operator in the Western Union's El Paso office, where our company's message had to be re-routed from El Paso up to Las Cruzes, which is up the Rio Grande River up above El Paso.

Well, the El Paso telegrapher took this message and wired his own friends in Las Cruzes to file on the lands before our man could get there; and that man and his associates have drawn well over $100,000 in royalties from us, from our company -- perhaps 2 or 3 hundred thousand, I haven't seen the figure recently -- and they never did a single solitary lick of work on the permit land. All he did was pay a man to go in and file on lands the description of which he had picked off the telegraph wires. We were never able to do anything about that.

Q: You had no legal recourse against this sort of thing?

Albright: We had no legal recourse against it. But that's the sort of thing that went on. If anybody had any hint that anything was being discovered anywhere, and that applied to oil as well, these people would rush in and get a permit

~~them~~ for exploration, and then you'd have to deal with them before you could explore the lands covered by permit.

That was the way with practically all the lands we had. ~~Before we got through with it,~~ we had to take assignments of ~~we were taking~~ permits from people, and agree~~ing~~ to pay royalties; then we would explore, and if we found potash, we'd get a lease, but we were still subject to the royalty agreement. And that was true of the other companies down there. There are quite a lot of people that have been living off royalties for years, on potash royalties, and never did any exploring and producing ~~work on them~~ at all.

There's a mother and son -- again, I won't use any names -- but they have done this with oil and potash and other minerals for many years. They've lived very richly, and have never done anything but travel around and keep in touch with mining situations in the Southwest and oil situations, and have lived, as I say, quite richly off of royalties. They've never spent a nickel for exploration or a nickel for production.

W: Has there been any temptation, or have you actually done anything in the way of protecting your messages, so that things like this don't happen again?

Albright: ~~Well, there was no other way to do it in those days.~~ ~~Or,~~ Well, that was the usual way to do it in those days.

Of course, after that we coded everything. Once we got caught like that, we coded messages. But there wasn't much ~~you~~ we could do after that, because we'd discovered a rich body of ore, and just as soon as the first applications were filed, why, there were others that followed right in, and they filed for miles around us. We were in the midst of permits in the hands of other people.

Once you discovered an area, that's regarded as a proven field -- that is, not just one core drill, but when it's been proven to the point where you're actually producing -- after that, the land is not subject to permits. It's subject to ~~auction.~~ lease to the highest bidder. People who want any more land in that neighborhood have to file bids for it. The government sells ~~your~~ a lease on it to the highest bidder. But somebody has to go in first and pioneer, and get a permit and explore, and find a commercial body of ore. Then he gets a lease, and he can go ahead with his mine. That proves up an area, and after that, that particular area is not subject to prospecting permits.

Q: But all these prospecting permits in your neighborhood were filed between the time you explored and the time you'd actually proved it?

Albright: Between the time we'd actually discovered it, and before we proved it. Before we proved it to be a commercial body.

This man who intercepted the message, in the telegraph office at El Paso, was fortunate enough to file on the richest land we ~~had~~ located. Therefore he's drawn ~~on~~ royalties for 25 years. I think he's probably retired by now. I understand he's still alive ~~down there.~~ near El Paso. Incidentally, he's a very religious fellow, and every once in a while he likes to send me a card for Christmas or Easter, or he usually sends me a nice little New Testament or Old Testament or some little prayerbook or something. He's extremely religious. I've got a little collection of these beautiful little miniature books, with very fine print, that he sends in, and the card that comes along with it is always a religious card, expressing his gratitude for his unusual situation and our consideration of him. Of course, we couldn't do anything about it anyway, so we've always tried to be a friend of his.

Q: It's awfully cynical. How were relations between you and the cartel as the outbreak of the war drew close? In '37, '38, after the Spanish Civil War and Ethiopia it was clear that things were going to pot in Europe -- was this reflected at all in business associations?

Albright: ~~We never had much association. We knew them. In 1935 -- well, let me go back a little bit.~~

The cartel agents here, known as the ~~KV~~ NV Potash Export

Maatschifijâ ? -- a Dutch concern, the corporation operated here was incorporated in Holland and had headquarters in Amsterdam; that was just a method they had of building their organization. They were not only good people from the standpoint of production -- they made good products, they kept their contracts, their sales organization was made up of a very agreeable people. There was a Frenchman and a German at the head of it. In those days the German was Harry H. Hollesen, who really was of Danish extraction, and a Frenchman by the name of Rene Gide, Mr. Hollesen is dead, but Mr. Gide is still alive. He's retired and lives in Paris. But all their salesmen were Americans. They ~~didn't have~~ had foreigners, down the line, but they were not among their top men. ~~I think they did have some.~~ ~~But~~ They also had an educational bureau --that is, they were engaged in teaching the farmers how to use potash: a propaganda agency, a very effective one.

Well, by 1935 we Americans -- there were three of us in the field by that time, the Potash Company of America had come in -- the Potash Company of America, American Potash and Chemical, and ourselves -- by that time, the foreign NV ~~they~~ felt, and said so quite frankly, that we ought to pay some of the expenses of propaganda and education and research, and the granting of scholarships, fellowships, to people who were studying agronomy. (Agronomy is the name of the science of soil development.)

We agreed that that was a fair thing to say. There was no reason why we should expect them to do all the basic educational work. We should join with them. And so we organized what is known as the American Potash Institute, API, under the leadership of Dr. John W. Turrentine, who was at that time the top potash expert in the federal government, and had been for years. He had the confidence and respect of the foreigners, as well as ourselves. They all knew him.

So we established in 1935 the American Potash Institute, with headquarters in Washington, in the old Investment Building, and we still have that Institute. It now owns its own building on 16th Street, almost across from the Statler Hotel, near the corner of 16th and L Streets, and it's headed by Dr. Harvey Mann. Dr. Turrentine is still alive. He's past 80 years old, but he goes to the office every day. The Institute has agencies in Atlanta, in San Jose, California, in Lafayette, Indiana -- Purdue University, or near Purdue -- and in Canada, as well as a man, an agronomist, in Washington, who works the Northeastern country and this region where we are now. It puts out publications, grants fellowships and conducts research, and publishes a magazine -- here's a copy of a bound volume, six months of the magazine -- called Better Crops with Plant Food, which goes to colleges and to scholars and fellows, to farm bureaus and granges, and to publications that are interested in soil development. The Institute is a very

good agency, and our company's been a member of it from the beginning.

When the war broke out, the foreigners had to drop out, and when the war ended, after the foreigners were in a position to make a comeback here and bring in some potash, they generously said they'd be glad to rejoin the Institute and pay their share of costs. Of course, the cost of the Institute is assessed among the members, on the basis of their productive capacity, not what they actually sell or distribute but their productive capacity.

Q: Is that their refinery capacity or the size of their mine?

Albright: No, their refinery capacity, the amount of product that they can put out, because the ore doesn't count very much any more. There's very little of that sold.

We told the foreign groups that in view of the fact that the French, German and Spanish producers were maintaining educational research groups, agencies, in other countries of the world, except this country -- in Egypt, India, South America, South Africa and so forth -- that we wouldn't expect them to pay any of the costs of the Institute here, nor in Canada. The office we have in Canada is the only one of its kind there. So that's the way it stands today. They're doing the educational work in all the foreign countries, and we're doing it in this country. But just recently we have decided that that's expecting too much of them, that if we want to get into

the export business on a big scale -- which we are doing, we're getting more and more export business -- we ought to help on increasing the interest in potash and the understanding of potash. So we're arranging this year to make a substantial contribution to work in foreign lands, and that will probably be dispersed under what's known as the International Potash Institute, which has headquarters in Berne, Switzerland. There are two men there in charge, a Mr. Schmidt and a Dr. Terragon, and they're supervising the research work out of there, in various countries, and that agency also grants money for fellowships and scholarships.

So you see, the world is pretty well covered by these producers in Germany, France, Spain and the United States. Now, Russia doesn't contribute to anything. Once in a while she ships some potash into these markets and gets the advantage of what's been done in the way of research and education, but she doesn't pay anything on it.

Q: How did you come to the decision: these people are paying more into education than we are and we ought to help them out? This is the sort of thing that you don't usually think of a business corporation as undertaking.

Albright: That may be again where we're different from others, but it just seems only fair. They didn't ask us to do it, but we felt, I think, that if we did it, we'd develop more use for pota

We'd move ahead with this thing faster. We didn't think that they were doing enough in India. We had some special inquiries made in India. But we did come to the conclusion, finally, that they were doing about all they could in India. But we were conscious that they were not doing as much as they could in Japan or South America. With our help, they could do a good deal more. There was nothing in the laws that would prohibit or inhibit us from engaging in that kind of cooperation.

Q: Your journal is, by its title, not a potash journal. Why didn't you invite the nitrate people in?

Albright: Well, I think the nitrate people are perfectly well able to take care of themselves. They've got their own ways of doing things. The fact of the matter is that potash was the low man on the totem pole in this business for a long time.

There are three minerals that mainly go into fertilizers. One is phosphate, the second is nitrogen, and the third is potash. Well, now, ~~the most of our customers -- not most of our customers, but~~ many of our customers, our bigger customers, make super-phosphate. They have their own phosphate mines and refineries, so their tendency is to use more phosphate than any other mineral.

Now, the next one to that was nitrogen. The Chilean nitrate people were in the business for years before potash got going

over here. Nitrates are found naturally in Chile. The Chilean Nitrate Corporation import it not only here but in other countries, and they've done a very extensive job of advertising and are fairly well known. And of course, during the war an enormous amount of nitrogen was produced in the form of ammonia, which went into explosives and other industrial uses, so that nitrogen producers emerged from the war with a big surplus of nitrogen.

Potash had to fight its way up through this competition between minerals. I remember the first time I ever met the Frenchman in the cartel, he said, "I suppose you're afraid of our NY Potash Export. You do not need to be afraid of us. Your competitor is not NY Potash; your competitor is P_2O_5." Well, that's phosphate. He was right then -- our chief competitor was phosphate. The tendency was to use more of that than the soil really needed, in many cases.

We had to fight our way up by research. Well, we didn't want to be put in the position of fighting among ourselves, inside the organization, so just went it alone. Later on, I don't know just what year, but about five or six years ago, 1953 or '54, nitrogen and fertilizer producers tried to reorganize the National Plant Food Institute, the old National Fertilizer Association, which is a trade association of fertilizer manufacturers but some of us producers belong to it. They tried to reorganize that in order to have a two-sided trade association; half of it would be a real trade association and the other half would be a

research association. Had the plan been adopted the Plant Food Institute would have taken over our Potash Institute, and also would have done research in phosphate and nitrogen, and would have given out fellowships and scholarships and do all the things that were being done in our Potash Institute.

Well, we couldn't get together on that kind of a thing. We didn't want to be mixed up in that proposal, and we refused to cooperate on it. We'd rather have paid into two institutions than give up our Institute, which we thought was going a great job. And it has. So we've got the American Potash Institute. I was a director of it for more than 20 years. I was also a director of the Potash Export Association. I think I resigned from both of them in 1955 or 1956, when I was ready to retire.

Q: Who were the members of API: the companies or the individuals?

Albright: The companies. Five or six companies belong to it, and each of them has two directors. Not all producers are members. The International Minerals and Chemicals was never a member of it. It never did join. But I think most of the others are members. Maybe the National Potash Company is not. That's a Freeport Sulphur subsidiary. But I think the rest of them belong to it. I gave up my directorship in 1955.

Q: The cartel's program had been going along before you even came along as a company?

Albright: Oh, yes. I don't know when they started it. ~~It was under way, and~~ Of course ~~they have it~~ there are in other countries too. They have laboratories in France and Germany, and maybe in their individual countries, and then also in cooperation with each other in the other countries. I don't know what the extent of it is. I haven't followed it in recent years. I used to know what they were doing everywhere, but the last three or four years I haven't followed it.

Q: How about the use of potash? I thought potash was used largely by fertilizer manufacturers. I know it can be used on soil just as potash, but I thought it was usually mixed.

Albright: Well, it's used both ways. I would say the bulk of it is mixed. That's the way it's been. There's some used directly. It can be used directly, and the same way with nitrogen and phosphate -- they're used directly at various times. It all depends a good deal upon the condition of the soil, what the soil needs. The effort is made by everybody to give the soil what it needs. Sometimes just direct application is all that's needed.

Q: How does the American Potash Institute direct itself, then? to the farmer, or to the fertilizer manufacturer, or is the feeling that if they inform the farmer, he will come back to the

fertilizer manufacturer, and demand a certain proportion?

Albright: Well, it's done both ways. As I say, grants are made to colleges. Lots of it's done by the experiment stations, in the states and colleges, with the idea of getting these official recommendations as to what should be used. In other words, the college departments of agriculture, their agronomic divisions, their experts -- they determine what the optimum soil requirements are, and recommend a certain kind of fertilizer as optimum. They also have minimums, I suppose, and maximums, but let's say that a state says: "You ought to use 5-10-8," or something like that. That would mean 5% of phosphate, 10% of potash, 8% of nitrogen. It's PKN, is the way they run. I haven't looked into it for a while, but I think that's the way they are set up.

You see, the three run together, and that means the percentages, of those three minerals. I have my finger on one right here at the moment. Some agronomists suggest as high as 10-10-10, or even 10-15-20, depending upon what the soils need. That's what they're supposed to do. They'resupposed to be fair about that. The producer might, of course, just like the manufacturers of phosphates, who also manufacture fertilizers, might want to try to emphasize the phosphate, to try to have more of that put into the fertilizer. But if one can get an official recommendation, that's far and away the best way to do it. So

most all this research effort is directed to that way of setting it up.

Here I see, here's a 4-12-12 and a ~~3~~ 3-12-12 -- what's puzzling me at the moment is, just which one of those is potash. I think it's the middle one. But that's the way they work it.

Q: The differences vary according to the nature of the soil in the first place, and whether they're growing cotton, wheat, tobacco, or whatever?

Albright: Yes. They know what each of these plants will take out of the soil, and what they need, and they know what the soil has got to give, and the idea is to replenish those minerals according to what the soil needs. Of course, a very once in a while you'll come to a soil that doesn't need ^any one of ^the three ~~them~~. In that event, the fertilizer formula doesn't contain that particular mineral.

Q: Working with the Potash Institute, working with the Potash Export Association, a very small group of producers -- it seems to me you were extraordinarily vulnerable to anti-trust action, and you got actually involved in one at one time, I know.

Albright: Yes, we did --we certainly did. We got involved, in 1938; we were involved in anti-trust action. It seemed silly at the

time, because here we were doing everyth'ng in the world we could to get start-d in th's business. We hadn't had an industry, and it seemed a terrible thing ~~to be just,~~ the minute we got one going, to have to divert our attention and time and effort to meeting the charges of an anti-trust suit.

What happened was that --as we understand it, it's always been my understanding -- the Department of Justice decided to move against the fertilizer industry, claiming that they were violating the anti-trust laws in fixing prices and doing other things through their Fertilizer Association. Well, we did not belong to that Fertilizer Association -- none of the potash producers did. It was in the spring of 1938, and they found, after they got into it, that th's fertilizer industry was such a big one, and it required such a big staff to make any investigation of it, that they didn't have money enough to do it. They were way short of money. So they sized up their financial resources, and decided they had enough to tackle the potash and nitrogen material producers. So at 9 o'clock NY Time, -- no, 9 o'clock New Mexico time -- which would be about noon or 11 o'clock here -- FBI men walked into the offices of all the producers of potash and nitrogen and said they wanted access to our files, books and papers in connection with an anti-trust action. And that began the investigation which lasted for a good many months.

Well, there was a grand jury ~~that met,~~ in session for months, and we never knew whether we'd been indicted or hadn't been. Whatever happened never

was disclosed to us until the end of the case.

Q: Don't you have a right to know?

Albright: Well, I suppose we had, but at this particular time, we were confronted by a very bad law suit against us in New Mexico, by three farmers who claimed that we were letting salt escape into the river -- the Pecos River. We'd had a trial of the water case, ~~(I'm wrong about the year; it's 1939) -- we'd had a trial of the case~~ in the fall of 1938, and it ended just before Christmas. The jury decided against us. They decided we had let salt escape into the Pecos River and we had injured the farms of these three men. ~~They~~ Their farms were below our plants. Well, if that case, last stood and we were required to pay damages to those farmers, we were faced ~~by being sued~~ with suits by scores of farmers in Texas, and we'd have faced bankruptcy, because we couldn't possibly have met the claims of all the people on the river below us. Well, we knew perfectly well that we hadn't let any salt escape into the river, that the river had always been salty; it had always been known as a salty, dirty river. Even back in the early days the Spaniards had called it the Rio ~~Perdi~~ Puerco, which means the pig river or dirty river, and the early transients across the country in covered wagons, headed for California, stopped at the Pecos and wouldn't even let their horses and cattle drink the water. So there had always been bad water in that section.

Well
~~So~~ we got a new trial, but we were faced with the possibility of losing that water case, and if it came out that we had been violating the anti-trust laws, or were being prosecuted for that, it could be very dangerous to us. So when we found ourselves under investigation, we employed a very fine attorney to handle our case, and we of course were in touch with the Department of Justice in Washington, although we'd never been told what the grand jury had done, if it had done anything. I don't think it actually had acted. We took the matter up with the Department of Justice.

Well, Thurman Arnold was the Assistant Attorney General at that time, and he had an economist by the name of George Comer, and these men had a very great curiosity about how companies are formed and how they do things and how they're developed and how they're organized and all that sort of thing, and so one night when our attorneys and I were together in this office of the Assistant Attorney General, the suggestion was made that the potash industry put itself into what might be called a goldfish bowl, and make everything we had available to a Government agency to make an economic study in every direction of our affairs.

We had to make a quick decision as to whether we'd do that. We realized that if we decided to do it, the other companies would have to do it too. We'd all be in the same boat. And we decided that we had everything to gain and nothing to lose by just letting them take everything we had and look it all over -- this to be done by an economist in the Department of Commerce by the

name of Dr. Willard Thorpe, who had been professor of economics at Amherst, and I think he's still there. He was at that time an economist for the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce of the Department of Commerce, and he had an associate by the name of Tupper. We decided to let them ~~do it~~, make this study that they wanted, but we asked Mr. Thurman Arnold, the Assistant Attorney General, that if by any chance we were indicted on the basis of data that they'd collected out of our files, because they had FBI men in all our offices examining everything we had, that the indictment be sealed; that no publicity be given to it, and that it be sealed until we could have this economic study that they wanted so badly.

Well, he tried to tell us at first that the indictment didn't mean anything, that it was like a traffic ticket, that there were just lots of these anti-trust cases and people were being indicted all the time and it wasn't any terrible thing to have happen to you and so forth. But our attorneys told him quite frankly that they didn't look at it that way at all. They said that all our people had been free of anything of that kind, and they said that particularly the ~~president~~ executive of our company (which was myself) had an honorable career in the government, had gotten to be the head of a bureau in the Department of the Interior, and that he wouldn't regard an indictment as any little traffic ticket, he'd regard it as a very big smear. ~~They~~ We said that we didn't want ~~that~~ any indictment news to be given out unless there were plenty of good grounds

for it, which we doubted would happen.

So he agreed that any indictment would be sealed. We also pointed out that if word came out that officers of our company were indicted, it would be big headlines in New Mexico, and would mean that we might have a decision against us in the water case.

Q: Did Arnold know about the water case?

Albright: We told him. We were just going down there; we were on our way down to Carlsbad to hear a retrial of the water case. We'd gotten a change of venue. The case was being tried in another county -

Q: On the theory that the jury in the first county would be prejudiced?

Albright: The jury in the first county was prejudiced. We wanted to get it clear out of the county where these farmers lived, which we did. So we had an understanding with the Department of the Attorney General, and with our attorneys, that if the indictment was handed down, and it was sealed , that we would come back. In the meantime they would go ahead with their questionnaire and whatever they wanted to submit in connection with this survey of our potash business, which of course all the companies would have to undergo, ~~have to go into it.~~ Some of them might disagree and refuse to do it, but we doubted if they would, once

one company had agreed the others would almost have to.

Q: In other words, this meeting in Washington was ~~your~~ with your attorneys as US Potash, not the potash industry.

Albright: No -- just our attorneys. We had two of them, Mr. Edwin A. Dorr and Paul Spurr, vice-president and general counsel of our company, and myself.

So, we had our attorneys' advice that if the indictment was handed down and was sealed, then they would wire us that "A baby is born and it's in a bassinette." We'd know then that there had been an indictment handed down and it was sealed. "Bassinette" meant the seal, you see. Because that would have to be telephoned over from El Paso. It would have had to go through the hands, probably, of this same telegrapher who imposed on us before. Also it would have to be telephoned out into this remote county seat, ~~the~~ To Lovington, county seat of ~~Lea~~ Lea county, New Mexico, where we were going to try the case.

Well, after we were about halfway through the trial of the case, we got word one night that "the baby was born and was in a bassinette," realizing that the jury here in New York had indicted us. But we went on with the case, and we won. We won the water case.

Q: You were not going to be notified if the jury dismissed the charges?

Albright: Yes, we would have been notified, but that would have just said "dismissed" or something like that, some little simple word like that.

Anyway, we were faced with two things. We had to be prepared for whatever action the Department of Justice took, although we didn't expect any, in view of the promise we'd made for the study, and we had to get ready for the investigation, the turning over of everything that we had that was asked for.

I came back from the Coast to White Sulphur Springs, where we were having the annual convention of the National Fertilizer Association, and there I met representatives of the Department of Commerce whom I knew. They were there at all these conventions to make speeches or present statistics and so forth, they were the part of the Department of Commerce concerned with foreign and domestic handling of chemicals. Well, they told me --and the other potash people that were there -- that when we saw the questionnaire, the program of what we would have to collect and present to the Department of Justice and the Department of Commerce, they thought we wouldn't do it. They said it was the most extravagant, and, as they put it, outrageous set of requirements that they'd ever seen, and they couldn't believe any industry would consider doing it. They stated that they thought not only was it asking for an enormous amount of material that they didn't need and would never use and had no right to have, but that it would cost us an enormous amount of money to get it together.

But we'd made our promise, and so we dug in to do it. And as a matter of fact, it did cost our company $10,000 to answer the inquiry questions. The answer was a book, a big volume of material, setting forth practically everything we had done from the time we started to explore down there, all our exploration, all the data regarding all our core tests, history of our mining, history of our refining, history of our sales, history of our shipments, and the complete record of practically everything we'd shipped and what we got for it and all our finances, and our personnel, and practically everything. We were certainly in a goldfish bowl. The guts of our business were all laid out right there in print.

We went through that, and then Dr. Thorpe and Dr. Tupper made a study of everything submitted by the three companies, and the upshot of it was that they came forth with one of the finest reports that any industry ever had, on the way we had gone about our exploration and our development and our sales. They practically said it was one of the finest exhibitions of American ingenuity and organizational effort, and successful enterprise that they knew. It was an extraordinary document.

Well, we still had, of course, hanging over us, these sealed indictments. Mr. Arnold was one of these guys that always had to have something to brag about. I'll never forget him, as a type of man I never can respect. He wasn't willing to take that fine clearance and say, "Well, go on about your business. We'll dismiss these indictments, go on about your basiness and good luck to you, keep on being as good operators as you are and as successful as you are."

Nothing doing. He was willing, on the basis of that, to drop the criminal end of ~~it~~ the case, to drop the indictments, to what he called "~~non pros~~ nol pros" the case. That is, he could ~~produce~~ decide to what they call "~~nulle prosequi~~ nolle prosequi" -- "we do not desire to prosecute," I think that's what it means, the Latin, I've forgotten now although I'm a lawyer myself, but I think that's the general meaning. But simultaneously he would file a civil case against us, as an industry that should have some instructions given to ~~us~~ it as to how to conduct ourselves, and that would mean signing a consent decree.

That's what we did. These indictments were dismissed, and a civil suit was filed, and we ~~entered~~ signed a consent decree, and it was a picayune inconsequential thing -- because all it required us to do was to introduce two price systems, instead of one. We had the one price system of selling CIF, Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific ports, which meant that our price would include the freight from Carlsbad to the ports, ~~or any destination, but of course it also meant -- no, not any destination, but the ports.~~ It meant that if you were inside the country you paid to the port plus the freight back, that's the way a CIF quotation is respected and carried out.

Q: Does it actually go to the port and then back?

Albright: No, there's a phantom freight in there. But it was the same as the foreigners were doing. See, we were competing with

the foreigners. Now, the foreigners were actually shipping to the port. They had to ship to the port. Then they would have to pay inland freight. So we were meeting their price, with our CIF price; we were not charging any more than they did, but we wouldn't actually have to ship to the port and then back again, we'd ship it direct, don't you see. So Justice Department was ~~they were~~ trying to get around the phantom freight, which is the way all freight rates were quoted in those days. That's the old "Pittsburgh plus" -- if you know about economics -- as applied to steel, don't you know.

Q: Basing point.

Albright: Yes, it's the basing point system.

They insisted we also quote an FOB price: If somebody wanted to buy at Carlsbad and pay the freight himself, he could do it.

Well, of course that left us free to quote a price at Carlsbad which was high enough so that they'd pay practically the same whichever way the did it. They couldn't gain very much by doing that. At any rate, they had, technically, a point there.

The other thing we agreed to do was to sell directly to farmers, instead of selling only to ~~customers~~ fertilizer producers. So we were willing to agree to that, because they couldn't go so far as to tell us we had to sell in 10 pound packages or 20 pound packages or anything like that. We could still retain the right to sell by the carload. So neither of these requirements really

affected our business. Those were the only things we agreed to.

Q: The pricing arrangement, however -- you were kind of defeating their purpose by actually in effect keeping the phantom freight. If you charged an FOB Carlsbad price which was almost the same as CIF Desmoines, or something, there was a piece of change there that was going into the company's pocket that was actually not spent.

Albright: Absolutely. Well, they knew that, but they had no way of enforcing that. They couldn't make you quote a lower rate. They couldn't start fixing your prices. They couldn't do that. They had to just outline a system of prices, and then leave us to follow it up in our discussions as to what we could do. But as a matter of fact, it soon developed, in the course of a few years, ~~it developed into an~~ a system of FOB price, which ~~it is~~ we have today. We got away from the CIF price, which we'd had all those years. The war broke us away from it. We didn't have to compete with the foreigners, and so we were glad to give our customers in the Middlewest some advantages, don't you see, being closer to us.

Q: In the effect, though, your holding the price up (By the CIF system) was giving an advantage to the cartel, wasn't it?

Albright: Well, it probably would have, if it had continued, but you see, this case wasn't settled until the war was on.

The fact was that the exports were stopped before the case was settled. It was 1940 before the case was settled. It ran for more than a year.

But one of the proudest documents we have is the Thorpe-Tupper report, giving us this very fine clearance.

Another thing I can't ever forgive Thurman Arnold for is that after he'd got this all settled, he made a speech somewhere -- and I'm sorry I haven't got a reference to it -- in which he said that he had investigated this potash industry, and that he had fortunately brought the case to a close, at the beginning of the war, and prevented us from gouging the farmer to the extent of, I don't know, 15 or 20 million dollars a year, or whatever it was. And he computed his great achievement for the farmer in this way. He said that during the First World War, prices, during the war, owing to the stoppage of all imports, had risen to $500 per ton. So he took the tonnage that was being shipped during this second war, don't you see, that was available on the American market, based upon our production figures, and multiplied that by $500, where the price was about $23 or $24 a ton, something like that -- I don't recall just what it was -- and it continued at that price, and would have continued anyway. But he takes the difference between that and about $500 a ton, and multiplies it by the tonnage, and gets fabulous savings that he's made for the farmer.

Of course, it was ridiculous on the face of it, even if we'd never heard of him the potash price wouldn't have gone up like that. The law of supply and demand was operating, don't you see. Anyway, we Americans were sensible business men.

Q: And the $500 price in the First World War was based on a kind of Rube Goldberg production that you had to go through to get the stuff.

Albright: Exactly. By the methods used and the nature of the available resource it was highly costly stuff. It cost nearly $500 a ton, a lot of it did. The government lost 40 or 50 million dollars in the building of plants and producing of what little potash was produced. But Arnold's speech was a piece of demagoguery and chicanery and outright falsehood such as you rarely see.

Q: Did you denounce him?

Albright: No, we didn't denounce him. We just thought, what's the use, there he is, and forget about it.

I had an interesting experience with him one night. I was in Washington, and I was invited to a cocktail party, just after this was all over. I've forgotten who the party was for, but there were some very funny things happened that night. I was a victim of the conversation, in a way, and the other victim of a very foolish situation was Mrs. Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor.

I was ~~at the~~ standing near a table, and Thurman Arnold came in. He recognized me, and he'd been drinking a little bit before he got there, and he started chiding me about this potash case, don't you know. This was after it was all over. And of course, I could have said some very nasty things to him, but instead of that, I just simply said, "Well, maybe I'll be Assistant Attorney General in ~~that~~ your position one of these days myself, and I'll catch up with you," or something like that. I let it go at that. I didn't contradict anything he said. He had just been drinking enough to be trying to be funny, but nobody was laughing at him, because he was just silly.

The other thing ~~that~~ happened, right afterwards, ~~which~~ --. It seems that Mrs. Perkins likes a cocktail, but she didn't want to go ~~up there~~ over and get it. She had friends who would bring ~~them~~ it to her. Well, she was standing at a certain place, alongside of a door, and there was a lady there who knew her proclivity, how she drank and what it would do to her-- this friend of ours -- so she said she would show us what would happen. Of course, we were not around Washington enough to see too much of this. The point was that if you could bring martinis, or whatever the drink was, to her fast enough, that she would never be able to leave that door. She'd just have to hang onto it and stand there. And she proved it. ~~She~~ Our friend just brought her drinks fast enough, and other people talked to her a little bit, until she had her

transfixed against the door. She didn't dare leave it. She just stood there all evening. I do not know who broke her loose and took her to her official car.

That was one thing I didn't like, running up against Thurman Arnold; the other was to see Mrs. Perkins transfixed against the door.

Q: One other thing I wanted to ask you about the anti-trust case. How does a lawyer work with counsel? You were a lawyer yourself, you must have more vivid ideas than most people would have about how a case should be conducted. Does this make for harmony, or confusion, or what?

Albright: If you get into a situation where you've got to have an outside attorney, a specialist, take over, you just follow his orders. You do what he wants you to do whether you think it's all right or not. You might and you do have many conferences and talk things out, but usually his experience and his leadership guides you. We had, as our attorney, a very distinguished man named Goldthwaite H. Dorr. He's still in practice -- he's well over 80 years old now, but he's still here in New York practice. A very, very brilliant lawyer. I think he had been either assistant attorney general or had held some high place in the government when he was a young man. He was engaged as our attorney. He had been active in anti-trust cases.

And our general counsel, Mr. Speer, who is still here -- he's in the other office right here -- became, of course, in a way his assistant. He placed himself at Dorr's disposal. All of us did. I did, myself. In other words, we were all ready to do whatever Mr. Dorr wanted done. And he was so experienced and so brilliant that even the government attorneys deferred to him. Quite often, in our sessions with them, he would be asked what he would do in this case or that case or the other case, or what his suggestion might be for our next step. It would be interesting for you to know that the attorney for the Potash Company of America was Dean Acheson. He was with us all the time. I know him intimately, because of that whole year's association as the attorney for another company.

We had quite a galaxy of attorneys in that case. The attorney for American Potash and Chemical was a man named Fred Oliver, who was a very interesting Washington lawyer. A man by the name of McCarthy was his assistant, and then the German and French people had very fine attorneys here. One firm was Sullivan and Cromwell, which was Dulles' firm, although Mr. Dulles himself wasn't actually in this case.

It was a very fine body of lawyers of high integrity and high intelligence and experience, and brilliance of mind. It's no wonder that we had such a smooth case worked out for us. It moved along very fast and was very smooth.

Q: How does it happen that each of you retained your own attorney, rather than -- if the thing was against all of you -- simply depending on one attorney?

Albright: I don't think you ever band together and get one attorney to handle ~~the whole case, of that kind,~~ an anti-trust case

Q: How did you come to know Goldthwaite Dorr? Had you known him before that, or was this the beginning of your acquaintance with him?

Albright: I hadn't known Goldthwaite Dorr ~~himself~~ myself, but I'd known his brother, the famous engineer, Dr John ~~R. H.~~ V. N. Dorr, who was an inventor of mining machinery. He's now, I guess, chairman of the board -- although he's 96 or 97 years old -- of Dorr Oliver Company, one of the outstanding minery machinery people in the country. They have headquarters up here at Stamford, Connecticut. And they have offices in various parts of the world. But Mr. Speyer, our general counsel, had been associated with him after he finished Harvard Law School -- that is, after Mr. Speyer finished Harvard Law School, after the First World War. Also Mr. Dorr's firm was a very well known firm in those days. The head of it was Walker ~~Heins~~ Hines, who had been general counsel for the Railroad Administration during the First World War. Afterwards, he succeeded MacAdoo as Director-General of Railroads.

Walker D. ~~Heinz~~ Hines So ~~it~~ Mr. Davis was a very well known firm. His son is now representative of the Chase Manhattan Bank, in Washington -- ~~or~~ Mr. Dorr's son -- ~~Hassel~~ Russell H. Dorr. I just got a letter about him this morning, in connection with his admission to the Cosmos Club. He has another son who is in the United States Geological Survey. He's in Brazil. He's been on foreign duty for many years in geological research, in connection with exploration.

Q: What effect did the Depression have upon potash?

Albright: Well, of course, we were really not in the business much at what you might call the height of the Depression. We didn't get going until September, 1932. I would say that ~~well~~, there probably was less fertilizer being used at that time than there would have been if there hadn't been a Depression. In other words, there might have been more opportunities for quicker and better sales if there had not been a Depression. That was one effect on ~~the~~ our industry -- there probably could have been more sales. But I don't think we felt it from that standpoint because we had so little to sell.

The other point was that we could have built our refinery and mine cheaper if we had availed ourselves of Depression wages -- if we'd taken advantage of the unemployment situation and had deliberately sought out employment of unemployed, at wages that were depressed as a result of economic conditions. As it was, we

paid pre-Depression wages, got the men we wanted and paid pre-Depression wages. We made no move at any time to take advantage of any Depression conditions. And we've always been very proud of the fact that we built a profitable and successful industry in the midst of the Depression, without any help whatsoever from the government at any time. We didn't at any time borrow a Government nickel, or have any kind of grant or aid. We had no tariff. We had no support of any kind. The only thing we got at all, which we would have gotten Depression or no Depression, was a lowering of the royalty requirement for the first period of our lease, in recognition of our discovery, and the pioneering work we had to do in ~~exploitation.~~ exploration

Our operations meant the development of a town that was an old cattle town, which had been somewhat improved through the successful development of ~~our~~ a reclamation project, covering about 25,000 acres, and through the opening of the Carlsbad Caverns National Park. A town of about 2500 to 3000 people. Through our discovery and our exploitation of this potash deposit, it developed into a town that now is up to a population of around 25,000. It's built on potash, operated on potash, ~~because~~ They irrigate the land around there and the travel to the caverns, which is heavy and while ~~it~~ they help, ~~is~~ they are nowhere near the main basis for the income and prosperity of the community.

As a matter of fact, I would say that Carlsbad, New Mexico, never knew what Depression was, never suffered the Depression.

Albright: How about the recession of '38, did that have any noticeable affect?

Albright: No, that didn't affect us. That didn't affect potash. It might possibly have had some small effect on sales. We were going ahead each year, selling more potash. I don't recall the figures, but that year we might not have sold more than the year before, I don't remember. It might have slowed us up to some extent, in the rate of growth.

Q: That about covers what I can think of on the potash business.

Albright: I think you've pretty well hit all angles of it. You've discussed the growth of the business. Of course, I might say that we were the first successful miners of potash in the whole Western Hemisphere, our company was. Our job was to build a mining industry that would exploit a mineral not heretofore produced in this country, and we were successful in it. We soon had competitors. At first the Potash Company of America came in about 1935. The American International Minerals and Chemicals came in about 1940. And after the war, there was the Duval Potash and Sulphur, and the Southwest Potash, which is a subsidiary of American Metals Climax Company, and the National Potash, which is a subsidiary of Freeport Sulphur. They all came into the Carlsbad

region.

Then ~~we~~ over on the flats beyond Salt Lake, on the Nevada Utah line ~~we~~ there were redeveloped an old operation that was first started during the first war, what is known as the Bonneville Plant, named after Captain Bonneville who was with the Astor Party, the Astorians ~~(sic)~~ in the early days of the West. That's a small operation there, where they made potash the same as they do on the Dead Sea, that is, they pump up a brine and put it out into great ponds and let the sun evaporate the moisture, and then they take the deposit of salt and potash and refine it the same as we do in New Mexico. But they get the material by solar evaporation, the same as they do at the Dead Sea.

There's one other plant down there that never was put into full operation. That was started by the Farmers' Union, which is a group of Western Farmers allied with cooperatives out there. They also have Phillips Petroleum and the Big Kerr ~~Lee~~ McGee Co. ~~(sic)~~ in with them, but they have a very low grade ore. They put down one ~~XXXX~~ shaft, and somebody or other decided not to go ahead. So there are in the Carlsbad region today five operating companies and one dormant one. Then there's American Potash and Chemical Co. on Searles Lake in California, and Bonneville, so there are altogether seven operating companies in the potash business today.

We in turn, of course, in 1956 merged with the Pacific Coast Borax Co. to form the United States Borax and Chemical

Corporation, so we're in both borax and chemicals. That's true of these other Carlsbad companies, except the Potash Company of America. There's only one company, aside from Bonneville which is a little company, that works only in potash -- the Potash Company of America. That's the biggest producer. But we're very close to them in total production. We're very large producers, and so are they.

Q: They are also in Carlsbad, aren't they?

Albright: Yes, they're in Carlsbad.

Q: How does it happen that their refineries didn't produce as fine a product as yours?

Albright: They use a different process. There are two processes used down there. We use the old process that they used in Europe, what is known as fractional crystallization. We take our potash and we put it in solution -- I think I've explained that, how we take water and make a supersaturated solution of salt, very hot "mother liquor," full of salt, and put it through the potash ore, and it won't pick up any more salt, it will only pick up potash. Then we run it into vacuum coolers, keep it agitated as it cools down, and when it reaches a particular temperature on filters it will drop out the potash. Then the salt water will go back and pick up more potash. We use it as a carrier. That's

-- that gives us a very pure potash. It takes out about everything there is in there -- the magnesium -- there's quite a lot of magnesium in there, quite a bit of iron, there's a little bit of clay: all that stuff goes out.

Now, in flotation, you take advantage of the difference between the specific gravities of potash and salt, and the re-agent, which is often a soapy type of material, creates a froth, and it'll attach itself to one or the other, depending on what kind of a re-agenty you use. Either it will attach to the salt crystal or the potash crystal, and it will float it on off, and the other one will drop out. That's what they call flotation. But it doesn't necessarily take out these other things, or all of them anyway. It will drop out most everything else, but it's not quite as pure. Pure potassium chloride, pure muriate of potash, is 63.17% potassium oxide, K20. And we make something like 62.5 % with our process, whereas this other process will run from 61% to 61.5% . It won't be so pure, and it won't look pure and white like ours does. Ours is pure white. There's a sample there on the table. Theirs is a darker color. They used to say in advertising that you should use the pink potash because it has useful impurities.

Q: Is it true?

Albright: I don't think so at all. But it just doesn't look as good as our material. Furthermore, it's cheaper to ship our

material. It requires them, in order to compete with us at the same price per unit, they have to make some adjustment on freight, because it's cheaper to haul our pure material.

Q: And because they've got that extra 1%, or whatever?

Albright: Yes. They're carrying some surplus material on there that isn't potash.

Q: Everything you ship, you ship in bulk? You don't bag anything?

Albright: Well, yes, we do bag. We do bag. There's a lot of potash used just on the ground as potash. They'll usually want that bagged, because if we don't bag it, they'll have to bag it, so we do bag quite a little bit. Most all our export material is bags. It's easier to handle, by the exporters. There's always waste-- if you ship by car, and we usually ship 55 tons per car, why, you lose alittle bit in getting it out. Then, if you put it on a ship, you lose a little bit getting it in and getting it out. So that by the time you get the ship to Brazil or Japan, why, you've lost a little bit of potash.

In the old days, when we sold CIF to the Gulf ports, we used to ship down to Texas City, down near Galveston, and put our material on boats and ship it around to these Atlantic ports, and we always lost potash in doing that. I remember one day,

they came in and told me that the vessel carrying our potash had loaded at Savannah, I think the town was, and that we'd lost 40 tons. We finally got the invoices -- it was 40 tons less than what left Carlsbad. Well, I was furious about it, because I said, "Why, you can't any more lose 40 tons of potash in ~~xbs~~ moving it from Carlsbad to Savannah"-- I suppose there were four or five hundred tons, maybe a thousand tons -- "you couldn't any more lose that than you could lose the Empire State Building. How'd you lose it?"

Well, of course, as a matter of fact, a lot of it was stolen. It was just stolen, either in Texas City or Savannah or both.

Q: Do you lose more in a bulk shipment on a vessel, simply because it can't all be got out, than you would lose from a bag shipment as a result of a bag bursting?

Albright: That's a question I haven't seen any figures on. But these bags don't burst. Before the war, of course, we used burlap bags. Now we use five or six ply paper bags, and they're awfully tough. You rarely have one of those bags ~~bursts~~ break. They usually only have 100 pounds in them. They're not so big that they can't be easily carried.

Well, the potash business has been a terribly interesting

business. It was quite a romantic thing. It's been written up for so many years, all the story of the birth of potash during the First World War and the fact that the German French monopoly was bad for us and we nearly starved on account of potash -- it was called "the salt that nearly lost the war." I think there was an article in the Saturday Evening Post to that effect, "The Salt that Nearly Lost the War."

Well, at any rate, it's had so much publicity and the discovery was so spectacular, there was so much in technical journals and even popular papers and magazines, that we just seemed to be in the glare of a spotlight all the time, from the time we began. There was so much interest taken in it. So we got a lot of pleasure and satisfaction out of seeing this thing develop as well as it did. Of course, you can see from just the few things that you've talked about here -- labor negotiations and price war and competition with the cartel and anti-trust and Potash Institute and Export Association -- with all those things, we've gone about all the grinding apparatus that there is, that a business could go through, at the same time, maintaining a successful operation. That's why there's been a lot of fun in this thing, along with the trouble that came.

APPENDIX

Letters: Horace Albright to James Gerstley, 19 January 1978 and 12 March 1979
Horace Albright to Willa Baum, 4 April 1986

Obituary, San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle, 29 March 1987

Memorial, California Monthly, June 1987

Letters: Marian Albright Schenck, April 1987
Tekumaro Senge, May 1987

Excerpt from the 29th Horace M. Albright Lecture in Conservation given by Henry J. Vaux at the University of California at Berkeley, 16 March 1989

HORACE MARDEN ALBRIGHT
14144 DICKENS STREET
SHERMAN OAKS, CALIFORNIA 91423

(213) 789-8292

Jan. 19, 1978

Dear Jim:

Thanks to you - and to Muruel Wann - I have been privileged to read your story of the borax industry as you have known it - that is the BCL, PCB, USB, USP, et. I have enjoyed reading it and appreciate the opportuhity to do so. You did a great job in compressing an enormous number of facts about the industry and people connected with it into a relative few pages.

You have invited comment, and I have sent some to Muriel to write up and submit to you. Of course, I do not expect you to use everything I have written. Perhaps most of what I have written you will be interested in reading even if you do not or cannot make use of the information.

I do not know wheth r I have ever talked with you about my long acquaintance with R. C. Baker. It goes back to 1920, when in YELLOWSTONE Chris Zabriskie brought him there.

One incident I did not mention in my comments and that was a thing that happened on the T.& T. train going up to Death Valley in January, 1927, almost exactly 49 years ago. After dinner on the business car, we were all sitting around talking, and Mr. Baker went into great detail about his violin collecting, and later we all got into a discussion of taxation in England and the U.S. A. Mr. Baker had given us some idea of the great value of the Stradivarius violin he had kept after selling his collection. When he was in the midst of his views on English taxation, "Wash" Cahill who was sitting back against the wall, said in a loud whisper: "Gosh, I hope they take away his fiddle!"

I'm awfully glad you wrote this story. Congratulations and our affectionate regards to Liz and you.

Faithfully yours,

Horace

Mr. James GM Gerstley,
Woodside, Calif.

Please excuse my typing mistakes. Since I turned 88 my typing seems worse! H

[redacted]

March 12, 1979

My dear Jim:

Joe Hirt called me the copy of your new book which you so thoughtfully inscribed with sentiments which both Grace and I greatly appreciate. Our gratitude is abundant to you, and especially for the generous tributes to me which you write there.

We have read the book, and enjoyed every page. Congratulations on covering so much ground in a book of such modest dimensions. There are so many things about it that deserve enthusiastic and most favorable comment -- the jacket, the wide range of letterheads reproduced inside the covers, the many illustrations, the kind references to leaders and others in the P. C.S, the U.S. P. and the present U.S. I & C. C., the smooth narrative you write.

This is an excellent book from every standpoint. I put out your booklet on your beloved father, and reread it, and I am keeping them together - and Harry Bower's too.

You ought to write a book on your travels - alone and with Liz.

There is one very minor error, and I'm probably the only living person who would notice it! Chris Zabriski was born in Fort Bridger, Wyoming, not Fort Kragg. When a young boy, his father was transferred to Fort Douglas, Salt Lake City, where Chris played with children of Brigham Young!

Grace and I join in more felicitations on your really great book and in abiding affection for Liz and You.

Faithfully yours,

Mr. James M. Beretty,
c/o The President's Office,
U.S. Steel & Chem. Corp.,
1075 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles, CA 90010.

HORACE MAHDEN ALBRIGHT
14144 DICKENS STREET
SHERMAN OAKS, CALIFORNIA 91423

(213) 782-8282

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Faithfully yours,

Horace

Mr. James M. Gerstly,
c/o The President's Office,
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12045 VIEWCREST ROAD
STUDIO CITY, CA. 91604
(818) 980-6580

April 4, 1986

My dear Willa:

Thank you for your letter with details of your mining history project. It is most interesting. I'm glad the project only embraces California mining history, probably with emphasis on the period 1933 to the present. Still the project is monumental in several ways, and expensive.

You have done a good job in collecting people with California mining background to enlist in your interviews, I'm sorry I cannot be among them. My old age and health would not permit my active involvement, but while I headed a mining company for 23 years, I was a chief executive officer, the top administrator, but not involved in actual mining operations which were the responsibilities of mining engineers and other technicians.

The same is true of Jim Gerstley. For a few years he was President of the U.S. Borax & Chemical Corp. with headquarters here in Los Angeles. His father was an executive of Borax Consolidate, Ltd., of London. Jim graduated from Cambridge Univ. but not as a student of resources to be mined or of the mining industry. B.C.L. has a controlling interest in borax production. Jim came to California, and for awhile worked for the Dow Chemical Corp., then joined U.S. Borax as an administrative assistant. This was before the merger of the old Pacific Coast Borax Co and my U.S. Potash - August 1956. The borax mines of the Death Valley area had been closed, and the big open pit mine opened at Boron north of Los Angeles near the Edwards Air Force Base. Jim Gerstley had nothing to do with either underground mining of borax in Death Valley or open pit mining where borax is being mined today.

I have been in touch with with Jim and he writes that he is planning on a trip to Europe with his wife soon, and will also take a cruise with friends on a yacht. Apparently he will be away until well into the summer. I have a card from Jim Boyd from Southeast Asia, but he has travels in India and Africa ahead, so cannot help you for several months. A former associate of Boyd's is Jim Richardson, a retired mining engineer, now retired in Silver City, New Mexico. He might be helpful to you.

Some 20 years ago, a lady writer published a book on mining all over the world, including the diamond mines of Africa. I seem to have lost my copy. It is thin volume with hard covers of reddish-brown cloth. The main library or the college of engineering ought to have a copy. You and your staff would greatly enjoy reading it. One more thought: an oral history of Cal. mining might well include at least a resume of the famous mines in Nevada close to the Cal. lines - Virginia City, Aurora, Candelaria, etc. Tonopah, Goldfield, Ryloite, etc. You will have to include Bodie and some others close to the Nevada line.

Be sure to read Shinn's fine book on Cal. mining. Knopf reprinted three or four books for the 1849 Centennial in 1949. They must be there in the Library. Shinn was a Nat'l Forest Chief, after mining. His daughter, Ruth, was an U.C. Alumna, Class 1911. Hope the above will be helpful. Try and keep me posted on your progress. Fond regards

Horace

Horace M. Albright

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

WASHINGTON — Horace Marden Albright, a co-founder of the National Park Service and a longtime conservationist, died early Saturday in Los Angeles. He was 97.

National Park Service spokesman Duncan Morrow said Mr. Albright died of heart failure at 2:30 a.m. at the Chandler Convalescent Home.

Mr. Albright, who was awarded the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, by President Reagan in 1981, is credited with playing a major role in the legislation establishing the National Park Service in 1916.

The park service maintains and manages the nation's 79.5 million square acres of national lands.

Mr. Albright was working in the Interior Department in the administration of President Woodrow Wilson when he and his close friend, Stephen T. Mather, drafted the measure creating the park service.

When Congress passed the bill, Mr. Albright became one of the service's five original employees. He was later appointed as the first park service superintendent of Yellowstone National Park and, in 1929, he succeeded Mather as director of the park service.

He left the service in 1933 to join the American Potash Co., but he maintained a close association with the agency and with the U.S. conservation movement throughout his life. He retired as president of American Potash in 1956.

Born in Bishop, Inyo County, on Jan. 6, 1890, Mr. Albright graduated from UC-Berkeley before going East in 1913 to work with Mather in creating the park service.

He is the author of several books on the park service, the most recent of which — "The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913-1933" — was published in 1986 and co-written by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Robert Cahn.

He is survived by his daughter, Marian Shenck, of Studio City, with whom he lived much of the time in recent years; daughter-in-law Mary Albright of Irvine; three granddaughters; a grandson; and nine great-grandchildren.

← should be U.S. Potash Co.

Horace M. Albright '12 was fond of pointing out that he and Yosemite National Park were born the same year, 1890. Although their closeness remained a constant, the nature of Albright's relationship to the park changed to that of a parent, during the time he served as director of the National Park Service, from 1929 to 1933. His concern for his "child" went undiminished throughout his life, and it is certain that Albright, who died in Los Angeles March 28 at the age of 97, was gratified to know that Yosemite would survive him.

In retrospect the relationship seems almost fated. Albright was born in California's high country, in the town of Bishop in the austerely beautiful White Mountains. The rugged mountains and their delicate ecology taught him both a love of and respect for natural resources. Being a member of Berkeley's distinguished Class of 1912—Earl Warren and fellow conservationist Newton B. Drury were classmates and friends—provided early lessons in the value and power of human resources.

Albright went on to earn a law degree at Georgetown University in 1914 and was admitted to the bar in both California and the District of Columbia. While earning his law degree, he became a member of the staff of Franklin Lane, then secretary of the Department of Interior under President Woodrow Wilson. As the department's assistant attorney in charge of national park affairs, Albright, with his good friend Stephen T. Mather, was instrumental in drafting and securing passage of the legislation establishing the National Park Service in 1916. He subsequently served as the service's assistant director, from 1917 to 1919, and was superintendent of Yellowstone National Park from 1919 to 1929, when he succeeded Mather as park service director. He also helped create the National Conference of State Parks, which encouraged the establishment of state park systems.

Albright's close involvement with the park service from its inception spawned a number of historical documents on the enterprise. He wrote several books on the subject, the most recent of which, in 1986, was *The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913-1933*, co-written with the Pulitzer Prize-winning author Robert Cahn. He also collaborated with Drury on interview projects for Berkeley's Regional Oral History Office (ROHO) and wrote introductions to several ROHO histories of the park service and related American conservation movements.

After his term as director of the National Park Service, Albright began a career association with the United States Potash Company, beginning as vice president in 1933 and retiring as president in 1956. One of the nation's foremost conservationists, Albright held leadership positions in a myriad of conservation ogranizations, from the Save-the-Redwoods League to the Theodore Roosevelt Association. Other important affiliations were with the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Committee, Resources for the Future, and the Pacific Tropical Botanical Garden. His various efforts were recognized with a series of major awards, including the Theodore Roosevelt Association Distinguished Service Medal (1959), the American Forestry Association Distinguished Service Award (1968), the Audubon Medal (1969), and the Cosmos Award (1974). In 1980 President Jimmy Carter bestowed the Medal of Freedom Award (1981), the nation's highest civilian honor, on Albright, calling him "a living monument like the Grand Tetons he has fought so hard to preserve" and "a driving force for conservation in this country during most of the 20th century."

In addition to the Medal of Freedom, the honors of which Albright was most proud were the state's dedication, in 1981, of a ten-acre tract of redwoods in the South Calaveras State Park as "The Horace and Grace Albright Grove" (named as well for his wife, also a member of Berkeley's Class of '12) and the naming of the Horace M. Albright Training Center, in Grand Canyon National Park, the major school for the training of National Park rangers.

Albright also maintained strong ties to the University throughout his life. He received an honorary law degree from UC in 1961 and was named a Berkeley Fellow in 1968. He was the Alumni Association's Alumnus of the Year for 1952, one of five members of his class to be given the Alumni Association's highest honor. An endowed lectureship in his name in Berkeley's College of Natural Resources has served as a platform for many of America's top environmentalists. In 1983 Albright's fraternity, Del Rey, established the Horace Albright-Del Rey Scholarship Award Program to aid outstanding students in various conservation disciplines.

Horace Albright's wife of 65 years died in 1980. He is survived by his daughter, Marian Shenck, of Studio City; his daughter-in-law, Mary Albright, of Irvine; three granddaughers; a grandson; nine great-grandchildren; Yosemite and Yellowstone national parks; and a total of 79.5 million acres of public land protected by the agency he helped create.

APR 30 1987

Dear Friends: Marian Schenck

Every year from 1916 to 1979 Grace and Horace Albright sent messages at Christmas to their friends. Then it was just Horace alone through 1986. And now this letter comes to you early this year, in the springtime, because there will be no Christmas message for 1987.

As their daughter, but speaking for my husband, my brother's wife, Mary, four grandchildren and their spouses, and eleven great-grandchildren, I feel they would want me to tell you the final story and say goodbye for them.

My beloved Mama and Papa died almost seven years apart, she on June 15, 1980 and he on March 28, 1987. The sorrow of our family in losing these extraordinary people is mitigated by the surety that nothing - even death - could separate them. They loved each other so completely.

To all of you who receive this, it is a certainty that you were touched by the intelligence, humor, zest for living, warmth and friendship they both radiated as they walked through life. They always gave so much to their family and friends and received such happiness in return.

When she left him, some of the light went out of him. He was 90 years old and, shortly thereafter, near death himself. Though ever regaining his physical health, he gathered his strength of spirit, putting his ever brilliant intelligence, memory and sense of humor to wonderful use until the end. Two books were published, "The Birth of the National Park Service" in 1985 and "The National Park Service: The Story Behind the Scenery" in 1987 as well as several magazines articles along with more to appear shortly. As I left him on Friday, March 27th, he called to me, "Girlie, I'm sure I'll feel better this afternoon and I'll get on with the Ickes thing." (He'd already written five out of six episodes of his trips with Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, in 1933).

Papa received almost every honor a man could and appreciated them all, but never felt the joy in them that he derived from the addition of a hard-fought piece of land for Kings Canyon, a battle won in the fight for the Tetons and his beloved Jackson Hole or the experience of savoring a sublime moment in one of his treasured parks. After his death I was trying to complete an article for a magazine concerning his setting up of Hawaii National Park in 1920. I was putting on the computer his vivid description of the sunrise in Haleakala, dictated to me only a few weeks ago. He said, "It was a fantastic sight, another memory, every detail of which I recall these 67 years later." It suddenly struck me that the moment he was describing was March 28, 1920, exactly 67 years to the day he died, but his freshness of vision and vibrancy of life was with him still.

On behalf of our family, we thank each of you for the love and friendship you have given to Grace and Horace Albright and, through them, to us. We hope in the years to come we may keep the threads of their ties with you.

Faithfully and fondly,

Marian & Roswell Schenck

April, 1987
12045 Viewcrest Road
Studio City, CA 91604

Many thanks for your kind letter - My Father did so enjoy your visit - The U.C Berkeley friends meant so much to him -

Dear Mrs. Marian & Mr. Roscoell Shenck
It is my great regret and deep grief to know the death of my respectable Horrace M. Albright.
He was great. wonderful, very kind and friendly for all the parkmen of the World. He was the grandfather not only for your family but all of us.
He was the shining star of all the parkmen. How sorry we are without him. I fell the same sadness as you do.
I read the "Birth of the National park Service" with much interest and was deeply impressed knowing how many important things he has done for the foundation of the national park system.
I wrote him on April and informed him the recent activities of Japanese national parks and myself. I promised him to send the pictorial of "World National Parks" which superintended by our Japanese National Parks Association quite recently, hoping he can enjoy the national parks of the

world in his room. But I am afraid the pictorial delaid, not get in time when he could enjoy them.

The special service is going to be held in his beloved Yellowstone National Park. It is the best place for him and I think his soul will remain in the sky of Yellowstone forever. watching the wilderness and the park use.

I wish to tell you how much he stimulate me for the progress of Japanese national parks and especialy very kind and friendly for me. I never forget him.

Again. I sent my condolence to you and your family.

11 May-'87

Sincerely yours.

Tetsuro Serge

President, National Parks Association of Japan

I hope you will come to Japan before long.

CALIFORNIA WILDLAND CONSERVATION: UNITIES AND CONFLICTS*

By
Henry J. Vaux

The first permanent policy for conservation of forest and rangelands in California was adopted in 1890, the year Horace Albright was born. As we approach the hundredth anniversary of those two events it is appropriate to look back over the first Century of Conservation in our State to see what it may tell us about the process by which conservation policy has evolved from the simple times of a hundred years ago to the very complex ones which conservationists must face today.

William Howard Taft, President of the U.S. during the years that Horace Albright was a mining engineering student here at Berkeley, once said: "A great many people are in favor of conservation regardless of what it means". Although I suspect that Taft was giving vent to a bit of political cynicism when he made the remark, his words properly evoke both the wide diversity of concerns that conservationists have embraced, then as now,.and the power of the word conservation as a political symbol.

As to the diversity within conservation, the career of Horace Albright himself illustrates it beautifully. From 1915 to 1933 he worked in the Department of Interior, first to establish and make strong the National Park Service under Stephen T. Mather, later to expand the National Park System as Director of the Service. In 1933 he left the government to become an executive for the United States Potash Corporation, a mining enterprise with which he remained until retirement in 1956. After that he was Chairman of the Board of Resources for the Future, Inc., a non-profit foundation conducting a variety of research into topics affecting the issues which its name embraces.

Horace Albright saw no philosophical conflict between mining and National Parks, provided you did not try locate them both in the same place. He had a profound commitment to future generations, but also perceived that that commitment could not be met without also meeting legitimate needs of the present. This humanistic view offered a framework which could accommodate the apparent conflicts between the two phases of his career. It is in this sense that I will suggest that Horace Albright's professional life offers us a paradigm for conservation worth reemphasizing today.

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* Prepared for the 29th Horace M. Albright Lecture in Conservation at the University of California, Berkeley. March 16, 1989.

Eleanor Herz Swent

Born in Lead, South Dakota, where her father became chief metallurgist for the Homestake Mining Company. Her mother was a high school geology teacher before marriage.

Attended schools in Lead, South Dakota. Dana Hall School, and Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts. Phi Beta Kappa. M.A. in English, University of Denver. Assistant to the President, Elmira College, New York. Married to Langan Waterman Swent, mining engineer.

Since marriage has lived in Tayoltita, Durango, Mexico; Lead, South Dakota; Grants, New Mexico; Piedmont, California.

Teacher of English as a Second Language to adults in the Oakland, California public schools. Author of an independent oral history project, Newcomers to the East Bay, interviews with Asian refugees and immigrants. Oral historian for the Oakland Neighborhood History Project.

Interviewer, Regional Oral History Office since 1985, specializing in mining history.